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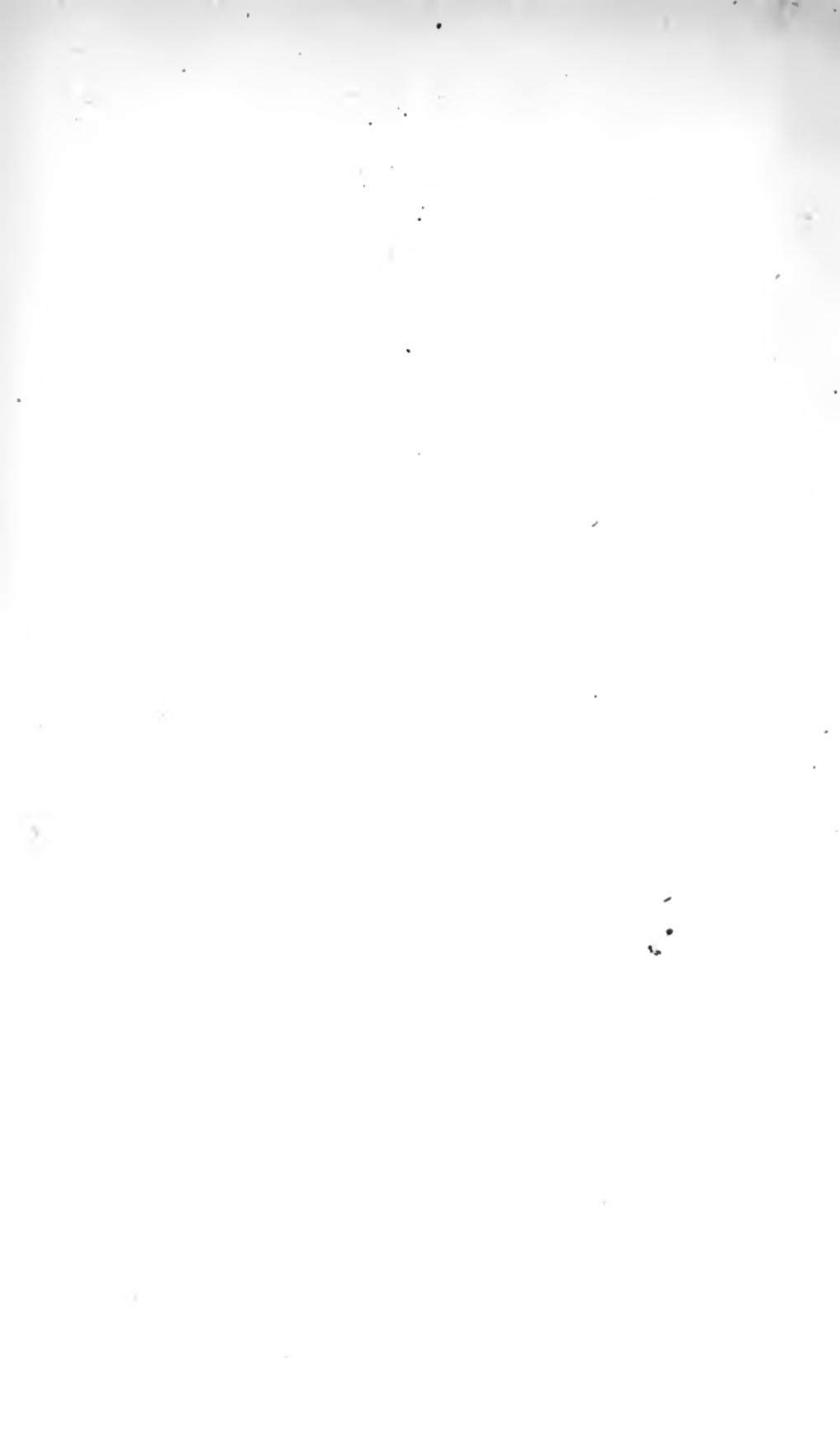
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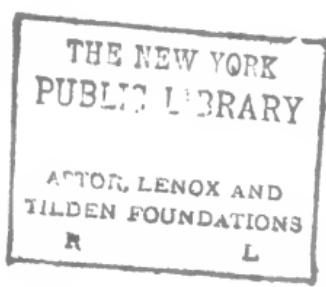




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Mrs. Mary Ann Graham

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

MARY JANE GRAHAM.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES BRIDGES.



New-York:

ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS, 285 BROADWAY.

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1853.
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P R E F A C E.

THE Writer did not enjoy the privilege of personal acquaintance with the subject of this Memoir. But when the materials, both of incident and manuscript, were placed in his hands, he could not but feel that many subjects of valuable interest and importance might be brought out with advantage to the church. He has been constrained to compensate for the paucity of incident by the introduction of large extracts from her writings and correspondence, which, however, will be often found to afford instructive developments of the character of her mind, and the principles of her profession. If he should be thought, by the extension of his own remarks, to have occasionally transgressed the bounds of a biographer, he can only cast himself upon the indulgence of his reader, in the exercise of his important responsibility, in availing himself of this opportunity to offer a few suggestions of Christian love upon subjects of present and most anxious interest in the church of God.

Such as his work is, the Writer desires to commend it to the blessing of the great Head of the Church, trusting that the example of the highly-gifted and consecrated character here set forth, may reflect the glory of His adorable name, and quicken the energies of those who bear that name upon their profession, to aspire to a more elevated standard of Christian devotedness and privilege.

Old Newton Vicarage, }
July 16, 1832. }

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE interest that has been excited by the following Memoir, has induced the Writer, after having exhausted the materials with which he had been previously furnished, to investigate fresh sources of information, by which he might bring forth the proper individualities of Miss Graham's character, and the circumstantial of her life into more distinct and detailed exhibition. This object he has been enabled to accomplish, by a selection from her own letters, as well as from communications readily furnished by her family and friends. He has added also a few of such extracts from her manuscript, as were likely to be generally acceptable, and prefixed a portrait, taken about four years before her death, which it was thought would increase the interest of the work. He now once more commits it to God and his church, with the desire that it may reflect—not the honor of the creature—but the glory of the Saviour.

Old Newton Vicarage, }
March 9, 1833. }

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MEMOIR
OF
MISS MARY JANE GRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

HER EARLY LIFE.

"THE works of the Lord are great; *sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*"¹ Elevated indeed is the Christian's pleasure² in "seeking out the great works" of creation. But it is the work of "redemption," which mainly attracts his delighted contemplation³—as the mirror in which the glory of his God and Saviour is most fully unveiled before him. The "new creation"⁴ on the heart of man is one grand division of this perfect work of God: and often does its display of "the beauty of holiness" constrain the world to a reluctant acknowledgment, and excite the church to joyful adoration—"What hath God wrought!"⁵ For not only will the Redeemer's glory be manifested in his saints at the blissful era of his coming⁶—not only will they then be seen "as the jewels"⁷ of his everlasting crown; but even now are they "the glory of his inheritance"—set forth for the conviction of the world—"that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and that the Holy one of Israel hath created it."⁸

It is the object of the following sketch to bring forth to view one of these striking manifestations of divine power and grace, and to illustrate, in connection with this memorial, some of those edifying and instructive lessons which it will be seen to present before us.

MARY JANE GRAHAM was born in London, April 11, 1803. Her father was engaged in a respectable business, from which he retired a few years before his daughter's death (and chiefly from regard to her delicate health,) to the village of Stoke Fleming, near Dartmouth, Devon. She appears to have been the subject of early religious

¹ Psalm cxi. 2. Compare Bishop Horne's beautiful note.

² Ps. xix. 1. Compare Rom. 1. 20.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 6; v. 17. Eph. ii. 10.

⁶ 2 Thess. i. 10. ⁷ Mal. iii. 17.

³ Ib. cxi. 2, with 3, 5, 9.

⁵ Numbers xxiii. 23.

⁸ Eph. i. 18. Isa. xli. 19, 20.

convictions. At the age of seven she had acquired those habits of secret prayer, which may be considered a favorable mark of divine influence upon her soul. But we will give the history of this era of her life in her own words. To a friend who had evinced some incredulity of the genuineness or permanency of early impressions of religion, she thus writes :

March, 20, 1827.

'You appear, my dear friend, to think very early piety too wonderful a thing to be true. It is wonderful—so wonderful, that, when David was contemplating the starry firmament, he was drawn for a moment from his meditation on the wonders he there beheld, by the still greater wonder of "God's ordaining strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings."¹ But David's wonder and yours were of a very different nature—he wondered and adored. Jesus, too, that "man of sorrows" once "rejoiced in spirit," because God "had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."² 'Even so, Lord Jesus; in thy rejoicing will I too rejoice; let the world think me a fool or an enthusiast, or beside myself, as they thought thee.' The story of 'Little Henry and his Bearer,' to which I believe you allude, I have been assured by Miss—, is every word of it true. Do not then bring upon yourself the dreadful sin of limiting the power of the Holy One of Israel. Jesus has said, "Suffer little children to come;"³ and they will come, if he calls them. As facts are the strongest of all proofs, bear with me a little longer, while I tell you briefly the history of a child, for the truth of which I can vouch. I knew a little girl, about sixteen years and a half ago. She was much like other children, as full of sin and vanity as ever she could hold: and her parents had not as yet taken much pains to talk to her about religion. So she went on in the way of her own evil heart, and thought herself a very good little girl, because she said her prayers every night and morning, and was not more passionate, wilful, and perverse, than most of her young companions. The God of love did not think this sinful child too young to learn of Jesus. He so ordered it about the time I am speaking of, when she was just seven years old, that she was led by a pious servant into some alms-houses belonging to Rowland Hill, who had just been preaching in them. The servant and an aged woman entered into a long conversation together, to which the little girl listened, and wondered what could make them like to talk about such things. But at the close of it, the old woman took the child affectionately by the hand, and said to her—'My dear child, make the Lord Jesus your friend now that you are so young: and when you come to be as old as I am, He'll never leave you nor forsake you. God the Spirit sent these simple words to the

¹ Psalm viii. 1—4.

² Luke x. 21. This, though not the direct, is an inclusive meaning of the declaration.

³ Mark x. 14.

poor sinful child's heart. She walked home in silence by her nurse's side, thinking how she could get Jesus to be her friend. Then she remembered how often she had slighted this dear Saviour; how she had read of him in the Bible, and been wearied of the subject: how she had heard the minister preach about Jesus, and wished the long dry sermon over; how she had said prayers to Him without minding what she said; how she had passed days, weeks, and months, without thinking of him; how she had loved her play, her books, and her toys, and her play-fellows—all, all better than Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit convinced her of sin. She saw that no one good thing dwelt in her, and that she deserved to be cast away from God forever. Would Jesus love her now? Would he ever forgive her? She feared not; but she would try. She would make herself very good, and then, perhaps, Jesus, would be her friend. But the more this little girl tried to be good, the more her naughty heart got the better of her; for she was trying in her own strength. She was led to give up trying in that way; and many long nights did she spend in praying "with strong crying and tears" to Jesus that he would teach her how to get her sins pardoned, and make her fit to have Him for her friend. Let me mention it for the encouragement of those who seek Jesus, that He did not disdain to listen to the prayers of this little child. He put it into her heart to read the Bible, of which, though she understood not all, yet she gathered enough to give her some comfort. One day her attention was fixed on these words—"The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."¹ Now something that could take away sin was just what this little girl wanted: and she asked her father to tell her who this Lamb of God was. He explained to her this precious verse. But who can describe the raptures which filled the bosom of this little child, when made to comprehend that the "blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin." Now she fled to Jesus indeed. Now she knew that He had loved her, and given himself for her; now the Spirit of God, who often "chooseth the weak and foolish things of the world, to confound the wise and mighty,"² "shed abroad the love of God in the heart"³ of a weak and foolish child, and "filled her with peace and joy in believing."⁴ She had no one whom she could talk to of these things. But she held sweet converse with her reconciled God and Father: and gladly would she have quitted this life to go and dwell with Jesus. Since then she has spent nearly seventeen years of mingled happiness and pain. But she has had Jesus for her friend; and He never has, and never will forsake her.⁵ She has forsaken Him more than once for a season, and turned to follow the vain things of the world. But her Shepherd's eye has been over her in her wanderings, and He has never suffered her *quite* to depart from Him. To this day, her vain and treacherous heart is continually leading her to provoke her heavenly friend. "He visits her transgressions with the rod,

¹ John i. 29.² 1 Cor. i. 27.³ Rom. v. 5.⁴ Ib. xv. 13.⁵ Heb. xiii. 5.

and her iniquity with stripes ;" but he has sworn never to "take his loving kindness from her, nor to suffer his faithfulness to fail."¹ She is constrained to acknowledge, that during all this time she has never done one thing that could merit God's favor. Free grace, free mercy, are all her song ; "It is of the Lord's mercy she has not long ago been consumed."² She is quite sure she could never have changed her own heart. No ; God has begun the good work in her, and he must carry it on ; and from first to last, let glory be ascribed to Him, and let her take the shame and confusion to herself. At this moment she desires to live, if she may be made the means of converting one sinner to Jesus ; but if not, she would rather "depart and be with Christ, which is far better." She is far from despising earthly blessings. Every morsel she puts into her mouth, the very air she breathes, is made sweet and refreshing by the loving hand that sends it. Once there was a curse on all her earthly blessings. But now "Christ hath redeemed her from the curse of the law, being made a curse for her."³ She would give it as her living experience, and leave it when she goes hence as her dying testimony, that there is nothing worth living for except to know Him, and see others come to Him, and wash their guilty souls in the blood of the Lamb. God has given her the blessing of seeing a happy change take place in some of the dear companions of her childhood and youth. She waits upon him for the salvation of the rest ; and there is no one, whom she longs after more ardently in the Lord, than that dear and valued friend of her earliest days, to whom this letter is addressed ; and to whom she wishes every spiritual blessing, that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost can bestow, now and for evermore : Amen and Amen.'

Some apparent discrepancy may be observed between this exquisitely beautiful and natural letter and her published account of this important crisis.⁴ Perhaps some readers may suspect the letter to be somewhat tinctured with the spirit of her subsequent experience. Though, however, the apprehensions of Divine truth which it expresses, were indeed clear and enlivening, far beyond the average of spiritual capacity of children ; yet her 'view of many of the doctrines of Christianity,' which she afterwards so fully developed and so richly enjoyed, was at this time 'very indistinct.'⁵ Doubtless also much of natural feeling and excitement was mingled with these early impressions of religion ; while what was of a spiritual character, as she afterwards discovered, was not sufficiently grounded upon that sense of universal guilt and helplessness which prostrates the sinner at the foot of the cross, simply dependent upon a free salvation.⁶ This superficial cast of impression—*without invalidating the reality of a Divine change*—will account for the instability which marked her early course in the ways

¹ Psalm lxxxix. 32, 33.

² Lam. iii. 22.

³ Gal. iii. 13.

⁴ Test of Truth. By Mary Jane Graham. (Seeleys.)

⁵ Test of Truth.

⁶ Test of Truth.

of God. From her own history we learn that she ‘was enabled to walk with God in sincerity, and without any considerable declension during the greater part of her childhood, and the commencement of a riper age.’¹ After this period, however, ‘more than once,’ as her letter informs us, she ‘forsook’ her heavenly Friend, ‘turned to follow the vain things of the world,’ and “went on frowardly in the way of her own heart”—“leaning to her own understanding,” and led captive in her own folly.

Of this period future notice will be given. Meanwhile we revert to her early years as spent under the roof of her parents or at school. Her parents considered her virtues as those *of every day*—that is, habitual—and not merely called forth on particular occasions. She was a most amiable, affectionate, and dutiful child, seldom needing correction, tender-hearted when told of her faults, and by her general kindness of disposition attaching all the members of the household to herself. She was remarkably free from selfishness; always ready to yield to her companions, even to deprive herself of what she valued. Her little pocket-money was generally reserved for some object of distress, or for some token of affection to a friend.

Her quickness of mind was a subject of early observation. Her reading was chiefly obtained by attending to the lessons which were given to her brother, then preparing for school. She was seldom seen without a book in her hand, and seemed never so happy as when employing herself in the improvement of her mind. Yet this thoughtful cast of character was by no means tinged with unnatural gloom. In all the harmless games of childhood none of her companions excelled her in playful activity;² while in the midst of her cheerful temperament, it was abundantly evident that the main concern of religion was uppermost in her mind. ‘I recollect,’—her cousin writes,—‘that when we were quite little children, she made some attempt to talk to me about religion—once especially, when we were sitting behind the curtain in the drawing room at _____. I did not like the subject, and therefore walked away, and joined my more worldly-minded companions.’

Her school career commenced soon after she was seven years old. She was however shortly removed, from ill health, and again, about the age of ten, sent to a school of a different kind. Many of her companions, who survive her, will probably long preserve the remembrance of that peculiar kindness and gentleness of spirit, which combined with her superior powers. One of them remarks her great carefulness to screen, as far as it was lawful to do so, the faults of her fellows, and her anxiety to plead for them when in disgrace: and so powerful was her advocacy, that her preceptress was constrained to remove out of her way, when her judgment compelled her to persevere in her discipline. In all the school difficulties, she was the constant resource, ever ready and willing to assist, without

¹ Test of Truth.

² One of her early friends however remarks, that her games and manner of amusing partook more of imagination and of genius than those of the generality of children.

any assumption upon the ground of her acknowledged superiority. One trait of peculiar loveliness was here exhibited, (the spirit of which was marked on various occasions in after-life,) in her consideration of any of her companions, who, from any unfavorable causes, might appear to be neglected. These were the objects of her particular notice, and with them she shared all her little indulgences.

Her religious impressions appear to have been cherished by the familiar exhortations of the husband of her preceptress, and by devotional exercises with those of her companions, who were living under the practical influence of their Christian instruction. To one of them she proposed to learn every day a portion of Scripture in private, and to repeat it to each other when they retired to rest. At this time she committed to memory the whole of the Prophecy of Isaiah, besides other portions of the sacred volume.

At the age of twelve her delicate health again occasioned her removal from school. Her illness lasted for about two months, during which time, when confined upon the sofa, she committed to memory the whole Book of Psalms. Indeed her powers of memory were of an extraordinary order. She was much delighted with Milton's Paradise Lost, and had learnt the greater part, if not the whole; of that magnificent poem. For many successive mornings she repeated to her father most correctly upwards of three hundred lines each morning. Upon her recovery from illness she passed several months with a careful servant by the sea-side. So instinctive were her habits of active usefulness, that she employed herself, though only in her thirteenth year, in collecting a few children for the purpose of instruction, and in distributing tracts. In returning home to her parents, she enjoyed with them the rich and responsible privilege of the ministry of the late Rev. Samuel Crowther, Vicar of Christ Church, Newgate Street—an eminent "watchman of Ephraim," now with his God.¹ Under his faithful and affectionate instruction she was brought to the ordinance of Confirmation about the age of sixteen, and publicly "joined herself to the Lord in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten."²

These interesting notices of Miss Graham's early life may suggest a few profitable remarks.

Let *Christian parents be excited to an immediate and persevering discharge of their anxious responsibilities*. Early impressions are of the highest moment in reference to the future course of their children. Let them be prayed for, expected, cherished. They cannot be too early or too urgent in presenting (after the example of the believing parents of old) the petition of the angel of the covenant—"How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?"³ They can scarcely fix the precious seed too soon into the fresh soil. The pure simplicity of the rudiments of the Gospel is specially suited to the dawn of infant intelligence; and

¹ Hosea ix. 8.

² Jeremiah l. 5.

³ Judges xiii. 12, with 18.

well would it be, if our children should never be able to recur in after life to the time, when these vital truths were first presented to their minds. The child's intellect opens faster than is commonly considered. The first impressions often retain a firm and permanent grasp through life. And abundantly has the experience of the Church testified—that early piety is eminent piety.¹

It may appear suspicious, that so little shade is discoverable upon the records of Miss Graham's childhood. But defects cannot be noticed, where they were not observed. Probably our own sphere of observation, if not our immediate circle, may be furnished with similar cases, sufficient to preclude an unwarranted incredulity. And indeed these instances often afford the most striking illustrations of the total depravity of the fall. For while Miss Graham was in the estimation of her parents all that their fond hearts could wish—what was she in the sight of God? Self-knowledge under Divine teaching soon discovered to her, that under this attractive garb was hid the mighty principle of alienation of heart from God. There was no natural preparation for heavenly influence. It was only a more lovely appearance of the death that reigned within. Her subsequent expressions therefore of self-abhorrence were not the ebullitions of a false humility, or of misguided fanaticism, but the genuine conviction of the Spirit of God upon her heart.

The subject of our history suggests also the importance of an early excitement of the principles of active usefulness. No doubt Miss Graham's habits of early activity had an important influence in maturing her character for the high privilege of devoting herself to the interests of her fellow-creatures. It was Cotton Mather's practice to endeavor to enlarge the minds of his children, by engaging them daily in some 'Essay to do good.' He encouraged and commended them, when he saw them take pleasure in it, and never failed to show them that a backwardness would subject them to his displeasure.² This example cannot be too strongly inculcated. To present to children an object beyond themselves, would tend much to counteract the natural principle of selfishness, so baneful to their personal happiness, and to their intellectual, moral, and spiritual improvement. At the same time, to give this habit its full effectiveness, it is necessary, that these 'Essays to do good,' should be acted out under the influence of self-denial, in the relinquishment of their own indulgences, for the benefit of the objects of their kind consideration.

¹ 'Barker's Parent's Monitor' gives a useful digest of information well calculated to guide the instructor, and to encourage the diligence and patient perseverance of parental faith. The principles of Christian Education are brought out with much simplicity and practical detail in the valuable and well-known works of Mrs. Hoare and Mr. Babington, which cannot be too highly recommended. Perhaps the most full and interesting illustration of these principles will be found in the Biographies of the Henry family, (Lives of P. and M. Henry, and Mrs. Savage and Hulton,) by Mr. Williams, of Shrewsbury, and a valuable volume recently published—'Domestic Portraiture'—containing the records of several of the late Rev. Legh Richmond's children.

² See Cotton Mather's Life, abridged by Mr Jennings. It is published also, Vol. I. of an admirable series of Christian Biography, by the Religious Tract Society.

CHAPTER II.

HER RELAPSE INTO INFIDELITY.

ABOUT the age of seventeen, Miss Graham's mind underwent a most extraordinary revolution. She fell, for a few months, from the heavenly atmosphere of communion with God, into the dark and dreary regions of infidelity. Allusion has already been made to this afflicting circumstance, in her letter.¹ But for a most interesting and graphic detail, the reader must be referred to her own published account;² some digest of which will here be given, in order to connect the thread of her history, and to exhibit a clear view of one of the most important eras in her life.

Miss Graham's mind at this time began to open in a metaphysical form—unfavorable to a simple reception of truth. And this, connected with a defective apprehension of her lost state, induced a spirit of self-dependence—one of the most subtle and successful hindrances to the Christian life.³ Thus was the way opened to a secret habit of backsliding from God. The foolish vanities of the world for a while captivated her heart; and her manners were remarked to be like those of other thoughtless girls of her own age. From frivolity she sought refuge in her more solid intellectual pursuits. All sources of self-gratification within her power were resorted to with the fruitless attempt of obtaining peace in a course of departure from God. Weared at length with disappointment, this prodigal child "began to be in want;" and many a wishful eye did she cast towards the rich provision of her Father's forsaken house.⁴ In turning, however, to religion for comfort, she found, to use her own words—"Alas! I had no religion: I had refused to give glory to the Lord my God; now my feet were left to stumble upon the dark mountains."⁵

The doctrine of the Divinity of Christ had often been to her, (as

¹ "She had forsaken him more than once," evidently includes a reference to this history. In the recollection however of her complete restoration, she added—"He has never suffered her quite (i. e. altogether and finally) to depart from Him."

² Test of Truth.

³ She alludes to an injury which her own mind, in common (as she conceives) with many others, had received from adopting Doddridge's form of covenanting with God. (See his *Rise and Progress*, Chapter xvii.) This was in her thirteenth year. Let it however be remembered, that, though this mode of dedication may have frequently ministered to a legal spirit, yet it by no means necessarily partakes of an evangelical character. This "subscribing of the hand unto the Lord," has been found by many eminent Christians, (as, for example, Philip Henry's family,) to be a cord of love, not a yoke of bondage. A touching and expressive record of this character, from the pen and heart of the Rev. R. Hall, is given by Dr. Gregory. Allusion is probably made to it as an acceptable ordinance in the service of the Gospel. *Isaiah xlvi. 3—5.*

⁴ Luke xv. 14, 17.

⁵ Test of Truth.

to many other minds cast into the same mould) an occasion of perplexity. Now it was "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." Though repeated examination had fully satisfied her that it was *the truth of the Bible*; yet so repulsive was it to her proud heart, that she was led from thence *to question the truth of the Bible itself*. 'I suspected'—said she—'that a system of religion which involved such apparent absurdities, could not possibly come from God. Determining to sift the matter to the utmost, I eagerly acquainted myself with the arguments for and against Christianity. *My understanding was convinced that the Scriptures were Divine. But my heart refused to receive the conviction. The more my reason was compelled to assent to their truth, the more I secretly disliked the doctrines of the Bible.*'¹

Continued resistance to convictions was the natural and melancholy result of this inquiry. She determined to lay the subject aside for a while, still 'persuading herself that there must be flaws in the evidence of so strange a history,' which only her want of maturity of judgment, prevented her from discovering. Those early religious impressions, that usually form a bulwark against infidelity, in her case proved a stumbling-block to her faith. Ignorant of the native bias of her heart against the Gospel, she considered them as the effect of prejudice, before her mind had been intelligently informed or exercised. She now, therefore, determined to burst her chains, and to think and examine for herself.

Hitherto she had confined her perplexities within her own bosom; partly dreading the influence of external bias, and partly fearing to infuse into another's mind doubts concerning a book, which, she could not conceal from herself, might after all be true. She endeavored now to strengthen her mind by pursuing a course of intellectual study, with the direct design of preserving herself from becoming a dupe to "cunningly-devised fables." And here she did not fail subsequently to acknowledge the special forbearance and wisdom of her Heavenly Father. Justly might He have deprived her of that reason, which she had so presumptuously set up in his own place. Yet was he pleased to overrule this waywardness of his child, as an ultimate means of her restoration, in applying her course of mental discipline to the effectual discovery of the fallacies with which she was now deluded.

The immediate effect however of these studies was decidedly injurious. Their absorbing interest diverted her mind from the main subject of inquiry; while they proved also a temporary refuge against the uneasy disturbance of her conscience. Even her intervals of reflection were too easily soothed by the indefinite postponement of the great concern to "a more convenient season." Occasional convictions were indeed felt, but without any permanent or practical influence.

Through the Divine mercy, this state of infatuation did not prove

¹ Test of Truth.

of long duration. After a few months' captivity, she was brought, though not without severe conflict of mind, to the full light and liberty of scriptural truth.¹ The conviction of the being of a God, in her darkest moments had never wholly forsaken her. A few hours' contemplation of the starry heavens darted into her mind a piercing reflection upon her stupidity and ingratitude, in what she justly called an 'unnatural and parricidal attempt to banish God from his own creation, to depose him from his natural supremacy over her heart.'² Her whole life now appeared to her (what indeed the Scriptures declare it to be), one continued act of sin and folly. Her convictions, however, of sin—being wholly unconnected with any discovery of the way of forgiveness—naturally tended to despondency. Every fresh sense of the corruption of her heart, and of the unsullied purity of the Divine character, brought with it a corresponding sense of guilt. She could expect, therefore, nothing but punishment proportioned to the infinite sinfulness of her offence. She could not conceive the consistency of her forgiveness with the claims of Divine justice; and the alternative of her eternal punishment seemed even less dreadful than the supposition of any inconsistency in Him, who, in her view, was the perfection of holiness. 'I had acquired'—she remarked—'such a perception of the beauty of holiness, that the thought of an unholy God was worse than hell to me. I felt that I had rather God should pour on me all the vials of his wrath, than that, carried away by an unworthy softness and weakness, he should forgive, and thereby encourage sin. *To undergo eternal punishment was horrible. To acknowledge an unholy God was more horrible.*'³

As her last expedient, her despised Bible was brought to mind. And 'how different'—she observes—'was the temper of mind, in which I now addressed myself to its perusal, from that in which I had read it in the commencement of my disbelief of Christianity! I was no longer a proud sophist, triumphing in the strength and penetration of human reason, and in the comprehensiveness of human knowledge. The contemplation of my own ignorance, weakness, and wickedness, had laid my pride in the dust. My eyes were opened to view myself as I really was—depraved and blinded in my reason, judgment, and understanding. *And this is the process, she adds, which must take place in the soul of every man, before he can pursue the search after truth in a right spirit.*'⁴

Her interest was early directed to the promises of Divine teaching to the sincere inquirer after truth. Their suitableness fixed her attention. Their freeness encouraged her heart. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find. He giveth his Holy

¹ It may be remarked, that severe providential afflictions about this period concurred with the exercises of her own mind, to awaken her mind to this self-abasing recollection of her fearful departure from God.

² Test of Truth, p. 75. Compare Romans i. 20, 21, 28.

³ Ib.

⁴ Test of Truth.

Spirit to them that ask Him"—especially arrested her.¹ She determined to make trial of them, conceiving that their fulfilment in her own case would be a '*Test of the Truth*' of the book, which held them forth for her acceptance. Though hindered at first by a sense of unworthiness, she ventured to apply: justly considering that whatever might be her apprehensions of her own deinerit, yet a state of submission and desire could not be so displeasing to God, as one of carelessness and rebellion.² But the description of this anxious crisis must be given in her own striking words. 'Impelled by these reflections—fearful and uncertain, but with uncontrollable, unutterable longings, I directed my applications '*To the unknown God.*' O my Redeemer! the first breathings of my soul were not uttered in thy name! I rushed into the presence of my Judge without a mediator. But doubtless even then Thy comeliness was thrown over the deformity of my soul; and the eye of my Father beheld me with pity, for thy dear name's sake. My prayer ascended up to heaven, fragrant with the incense of thy merits; though the poor wretch who offered it thought to please God by leaving thee out of it.'³

In this prostration of soul, she continued "watching daily at her Lord's gates, waiting at the posts of his doors." It need scarcely be added—she did not seek in vain.⁴ The Divine character now appeared before her—not—as before—in its consuming holiness; but in the combined glory of holiness and love. Her apprehensions of sin, of Christ, and of the whole system of Christian truth, were now irradiated with heavenly light; and with "simplicity and godly sincerity" of "heart," she was enabled to "believe unto righteousness." The character of Christ, as a proof of the credibility of the Christian revelation, arrested her particular attention. A minute scrutiny of His spotless life was most satisfactory in its result.⁵ 'The more,' said she, 'I studied this Divine character, the more I grew up as it were into its simplicity and holiness, the more my understanding was enabled to shake off those slavish and sinful prejudices, which had hindered me from appreciating its excellence. Truly his words were dearer to me "than my necessary food"—He was my "All in all." I did not want to have any knowledge, goodness, or strength, independently of him. I had rather be "accepted in the Beloved," than received (had that been

¹ Luke xi. 9—13. The drawing out of this argument forms the first part of the '*Test of Truth*'—upon which a venerable clergyman remarks—"I hope I have been for many years a suitor for this promise. But I never before felt myself so intelligently encouraged and animated to persist in my humble petition for more and more of Divine knowledge." See also these promises, and the whole subject of '*The Test of Truth*', powerfully illustrated in the Bishop of Calcutta's Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity—Lecture xix.

² *Test of Truth.*

³ Ibid. p. 87. It may be asked—"Where was all that knowledge and faith expressed at her first reception of the Gospel?" (See her letter, p. 3—6.) But in fact, her infidelity was a black cloud—intercepting all present apprehensions of faith and intelligence. There are eminent Christians in the Church, who have "entered into this cloud," and whose recollections are more or less familiar with this agonizing but triumphant conflict.

⁴ See Proverbs viii. 34, 35. Isaiah lxiv. 5; xlvi. 19. ⁵ *Test of Truth.*

possible) on the score of my own merits. I had rather walk, leaning upon his arm, than have a stock of strength given me to perform my journey alone. To learn, as a fool, of Christ; this was better to me than to have the knowledge of an angel to find out things for myself.'

After her recovery from this fearful snare of Satan, she was mercifully preserved from "turning again to folly," and led forth in "the path of the just,"² with increasing light, strength, and establishment. 'From that moment'—she adds—'I ceased to stumble at the doctrines of the cross. The doctrines of Scripture, which had before appeared to me an inexplicable mass of confusion and contradiction, were now written on my understanding with the clearness of a sunbeam. Above all, that once abhorred doctrine of the Divinity of Christ was become exceeding precious to me. The external evidences of Christianity, though I now perceived all their force, were no longer necessary to my conviction. From that time'—she concludes—'I have continued to "sit at the feet of Jesus and to hear his word," taking him for my Teacher and Guide in things temporal as well as spiritual. He has found in me a disciple so slow of comprehension, so prone to forget his lessons, and to act in opposition to his commands, that, were he not infinitely "meek and lowly in heart," he would long ago have cast me off in anger. But he still continues to bear with me, and to give me "line upon line, and precept upon precept." And I am certain that he "will never leave me, nor forsake me;" for, though I am variable and inconstant, "with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."³

The writer cannot but hope, that at this awful crisis, when a moral pestilence (far more dreadful than the late cholera visitation) is stalking through the land, the preceding narrative may suggest seasonable caution, conviction, and encouragement to some, especially of his young readers. Let them mark the connection of the first principles of infidelity, *with the exercise of the understanding and with the state of the heart.*

¹ This is not a solitary instance of impression from the contemplation of the character of Christ. Even Mr. Chubb must have felt some conviction, when he describes his life 'as a beautiful picture of human nature in its native purity and simplicity; and showing at once what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that Gospel which he preached unto them.' (True Gospel, p. 56.) Rousseau's exquisite contrast between Socrates and Christ is well known, concluding with the remarkable acknowledgment respecting the latter—'The inventor of such a personage would be a more astonishing character than the hero.' Yet could this man's heart resist the clear conviction of his judgment—'I cannot'—he subjoins—'believe the Gospel.' His Confessions, however, clearly trace his unbelief to its proper cause—the love of sin. See John iii. 19. 20, a text which throws more light upon the secret springs of infidelity, than whole volumes that have been written upon the subject.

² Psalm lxxxv. 8. Prov. iv. 18.

³ Test of Truth, pp. 112—117. The extracts given from this interesting little work, will be sufficient to commend it to the reader's attention, as the production of an author of no common power, and deeply imbued with the glowing principles of the Gospel. It will remind the reader of some of Mr. Scott's painful exercises of mind described in his 'Force of Truth,' and of the argument so successfully handled by Bishop Burnet in his disputations with Lord Rochester.

Pride of intellect in Miss Graham's case, was evidently one main cause of her departure from God. When her mind left the stronghold of faith, her scriptural light, which could only be apprehended through spiritual optics, became obscured, until she was gradually left to the Egyptian darkness of her own understanding. And this we apprehend to be a very usual commencement of an infidel course, upon principles equally opposed to reason and to revelation. Man, in his prurient desire to pass the bounds of revelation, forgets that while "the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children," the "secret things" are no less the property of God.¹ As he has, therefore, reserved them for himself, this "intrusion into the things which we have not seen," and cannot see, is the unhallowed indulgence of a "fleshly mind."² The extent and precise boundaries of revelation are determined by infinite wisdom; and could we discern them with a single eye, they would be found equally illustrative of a high regard to the happiness of man. A more expanded view under present circumstances would only increase instead of clearing up our difficulties. The eye would wander over the field of infinite space with a disproportioned power of perception. The objects, therefore, would be less distinctly apprehended; and the result would leave us more restless and dissatisfied, while the happy influence of humility, simplicity, and faith had been wholly disregarded. If we have not the whole view before us, let it suffice that we have all that is needful for our happiness and present duty. The attempt to supply what we conceive to be wanting, by the conjectural effort of reason, would be to subject "vain man" to his Maker's merited rebuke—"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"³ Every step of advance beyond the divine record is fraught with danger and uncertainty. "In God's light" alone "can we see light."⁴ The intellectual "light that is in us," when applied by the pride of man to the contents of revelation—"is darkness; and how great is that darkness!"⁵ Simple faith, therefore, however mistaken or despised, may justly be deemed the highest act of reason; while rational religion, 'falsely so called,' may easily be proved to be of all schemes the most irrational.⁶

¹ Deut. xxix. 29.

² Col. ii. 18.

³ Job. xxxviii. 2.

⁴ Psalm xxxvi. 9.

⁵ Matt. vi. 23, with 1 Cor. ii. 14.

⁶ The writer cannot forbear to add some admirable remarks from an unpublished manuscript of Miss Graham's, shortly to be noticed. 'It is true that faith compels our assent to many things beyond the reach of reason, even of the renewed reason. But this implicit credence is itself the highest and noblest exercise of the understanding. It is a reasonable assent to the testimony of One, in whom we repose unlimited confidence, because we have reasonable grounds for concluding him to be infinitely wiser than ourselves. An exercise of the reason is pre-supposed, whereby we are assured that the Bible is God's testimony; and an act of the understanding, whereby, having obtained this assurance, we infer, that every word of the Bible must be true.' The divine philosophy of faith, then, sets out upon these two propositions. The first an assurance, founded in reason, that the Bible is the revelation of God. The second an inference, equally founded in reason, that every word of the Bible is true; and must therefore be taken in preference to all the deductions of our own reason, which *may or may not be true*. Neither of these propositions is shaken by the fact, that the Bible contains many things which we do not

We would add a few words upon *the connection of infidelity with the state of the heart*. We are not exclusively intellectual beings. The affections so materially influence the judgment, as often to incapacitate it for the accurate discernment of truth. The natural bias of the heart is to sin, and *consequently to infidelity*, the excuse and covering for sin. The point at issue is, whether men shall remain the servants of sin, or become the servants of God—whether they shall be degraded as sensual beings, or raised to the elevation of intelligent or spiritual existence. Now, as the Gospel stands in the way of natural indulgence, it must be removed. So that if a course of infidel reading or intercourse with scoffers, has not furnished the necessary arguments, they must be invented from the man's own heart. The danger of infidelity is not, therefore, confined to the ungodly and profane. Every unconverted man must secretly wish the Bible to be untrue; and under this bias he will (except restrained by an Almighty power) endeavor to prove it untrue. A wrong state of heart, as with Miss Graham, gives the power and advantage to this active and malignant principle. In her early state of child-like simplicity she would have been safe. But the "fulfilment of the desires of the mind," probably more than of "the flesh,"¹ combined with ignorance of "Satan's devices," brought her into his snare; and she was "taken captive by him at his will."² Depending upon the teaching of the Spirit of God, our "path" in divine knowledge will be "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."³ And 'whenever' (as an original and powerful writer remarks) he opens the Scriptures, that same light that discovers the meaning, will not fail to affect and make our hearts burn within us with the sense of divine light, authority, and power. Of this the experience of the people of God, as they grow in knowledge, furnishes them daily with new instances; and therefore they do not stumble at the want of the present sense of that light, but are quickened to diligence, excited to frequent cries for opening of their eyes, that they may understand the wonders, that by the knowledge of other parts of the world, they are induced to believe couched in those parts, which yet they know not.⁴

understand; or in other words, that God may know many things that we do not know; that many things may appear to His infinitely holy and unclouded understanding, in a very different light from that, in which they are viewed by our narrow and prejudiced minds. When the first proposition is once proved to the entire satisfaction of the mind, the second must follow of course. Then faith, an implicit, child-like faith, becomes the only *rational* mode of proceeding. Every departure from this faith is a departure from reason; an insult to the understanding; a violation of common sense. And that we do make such departures, only tends to prove that, while the renewed understanding "consents to the law of God that it is holy, just, and good," "the law of sin," which is yet working "in our members," occasionally beclouds and perverts it.

¹ Eph. ii. 3.

² 2 Tim. ii. 26.

³ Prov. iv. 18.

⁴ Halyburton's Essay on the Nature of Faith. To the same purport Mr. Baxter writes: 'I think that in the hearing and reading (of the Bible) God's Spirit often so conurreth, as that the will itself should be touched with an internal gust and savor of the goodness contained in the doctrine, and at the same time the understanding with an internal irradiation, which breeds such a certain apprehension of the verity of it, as nature

One further remark suggested from this interesting record may serve to prevent unnecessary distress and misconception. Let not Miss Graham's vivid portraiture of her own feelings and views be considered as a general standard, as if the same intensity of mental exercise, and clearness of spiritual perception, were the exclusive evidences of a sound conversion of heart to God. Self-renunciation, diligent investigation of divine truth, and a conscientious improvement of the light vouchsafed, are indeed indispensable marks of Christian sincerity. Yet while the enjoyment of our high privileges will vary in proportion to the energy of these holy principles, *the measure of their influence is almost indefinitely diversified within the precincts of the true church of God.* It may also be important to observe, that many of Miss Graham's most painful trials (such as her intellectual pride) arose out of the peculiar form of her natural character. No sympathy, therefore, can be expected, or need be desired, in minds cast in a different mould; and any effort to excite or encourage it, for the purpose of establishing an ideal connection with this object of attraction, (which would probably be unaccompanied with a desire to imitate the spiritual excellences of the proposed model) can only originate in deceit, and tend to self-delusion.

gives men of natural principles. And I am persuaded that this, increased by more experience and love, doth hold Christians faster to Christ than naked reasonings could do. And were it not for this, unlearned ignorant persons were still in danger of apostasy by every subtle caviller that assaults them. And I believe that all true Christians have this kind of internal knowledge, from a suitableness of the truth and goodness of the Gospel to their now quickened, illuminated and sanctified souls.' More Reasons for the Christian Religion, in reply to Lord Herbert, and supplemental to his great work in defence of Christianity, (12 mo. 1672. pp. 135, 136.)

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL SKETCH OF MISS GRAHAM'S LIFE—HER VIEWS OF STUDY—EXTENSIVE ATTAINMENTS AND ACTIVE DEVOTEDNESS TO GOD.

MISS GRAHAM continued to reside in London for some time after her deliverance from that awful delusion, into which she had been permitted to fall. The remembrance, however, of this temporary apostacy was "ever before her"¹ with all that holy shame and self-abasement, which attaches to the "purified conscience of the pardoned sinner"²—humbling her in the dust, while yet faith, hope, love, peace, and joy, were the dominant principles in her soul. Deeply also did she feel the constraint of the command given by anticipation to a backsliding apostle—"When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."³ It was the great object of her 'Test of Truth,' to set forth her own case as a beacon of warning, an example of encouragement, and a monument of divine grace, for the special use of those who may be brought into the same seductive atmosphere of temptation. There is reason to believe, that her work in its original form produced its measure of conviction upon her principal correspondent; and we may confidently expect, that in a wider circulation, an answer to her prayers for a Divine blessing upon it will be abundantly manifested. During her residence in London, the ministry of the Rev. Watts Wilkinson, and a deep study of the sacred volume, were the ordained means of advancing her knowledge and experience of Scriptural truth. Her intellectual habits were a source of much gratification to her; and mainly contributed, under the blessing of God, to form her character into a mould of solid and permanent usefulness. It is, however, delightful to observe her Christian simplicity and watchfulness, to subordinate these valuable enjoyments to the primary object of the glory of God. Of this the following prayer, found among her papers, will furnish an interesting and edifying illustration.

'Before study of any kind, remember that it is but lost labor except the Lord bless it.'

SUMMARY OF THINGS TO BE SOUGHT OF GOD BEFORE STUDY.

'I desire to thank thee, my God and Father in Christ Jesus, for this and every other opportunity of improvement Thou hast given me. May the opportunity Thou hast given me be blest of Thee!'

¹ Psalm li. 3.

² Ezekiel xvi. 63.

³ Luke xxii. 32.

Enable me to receive it with thanksgiving, and sanctify it to me by the word of God and prayer. Oh let me know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and other things *just so far* as may be for my good and Thy glory, *and no further*. I would mourn before Thee the base ingratitude with which I have hitherto abused my time and talents, by loving thy gifts more than Thee, and seeking myself, not Thee, in them. Now I bring all my things to Thee; for they are *not mine, but thine own*. Take that *accursed thing self out of them all*, and condescend to use them for thy glory. I thank Thee that the meanest employment is acceptable in Thy sight, when done in the name of the Lord Jesus. May I set about this, in *His name, and in His strength, and to His glory!* May I not *once seek my own things in it, but the things that are Jesus Christ's!* Let me no longer lean to my own understanding; but may I so acknowledge Thee in all my ways, that Thou mayest establish my thoughts, and direct my paths! Suffer me not to be wise in my own conceit, nor vainly puffed up in my fleshly mind. Make me to cease from mine own wisdom. Be Thou my wisdom.

'Holy Lord God the Spirit! who dividest unto every man severally as thou wilt, *bless such of my studies, and in such a degree as* may be most to thy glory. If it be thy will, prepare me by them for the work, to which I desire thou wouldest call and separate me.' I commit this work to which I would devote myself, into Thy hands. Prosper it or not as Thou seest good. Thy will be done respecting it; only take *all self-seeking out of it*; get Thyself glory, Lord, in all that I do, and keep me from ever wishing to rob Thee of Thy glory. Lord, if Thou wilt bless me abundantly, grant that in whatever Thou givest me, I may remember I have received it, and not glory as if I had not received it. I set myself to this employment in the name of Jesus: may I have fellowship with Him in it! Let it not become a snare to me; but may the Lord, who is my confidence, preserve my foot from being taken in this net, which has so often entangled me!

'O Thou glorifier of Jesus! take of the things that are His, and show them unto me, and unto all Thy people, with such light and power, that our wills, desires, and affections may be quite swallowed up in His love. Let us have no will but Thy most holy will. Convince us that all things else are mere dross and dung, in comparison with *that* most excellent knowledge of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which do thou give us every day more abundantly, making us to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Even so, Holy Spirit, for the sake of Thy great mercies in Christ Jesus, to whom, with Thee and the Father, be all the honor, all the praise, and all the glory, now and for ever. Amen.'

¹ This was a plan which lay very near her heart, for the gratuitous instruction of the children of Missionaries, and of Christians in reduced circumstances, with a view to qualify them for the situation of teachers.

In the same spirit, an extract from a letter to a young friend engaged in the work of tuition, gives the following sensible advice, with a modest reference to her own case.

March 22, 1827.

'You ask me whether I think study is wrong. I think, on the contrary, if we study with a view to the glory of God, it becomes a duty to do so. If we study merely to please ourselves, I think *it is wrong*. Your situation seems to render study necessary; and when we reflect how few of those who are engaged in teaching, are truly pious, it ought to stir us up to the best improvement of our time and talents. The love of study and mental amusements has been my great snare, and has so very often led me astray, that I have been tempted to give it up altogether. I feel thankful to God that whenever I have begun to make some progress in my favorite study, He has thwarted my attempt to excel by some seasonable interruption, a fit of illness or some domestic trial. But when I think, how very useful a moderate degree of mental cultivation may make me, and particularly that it seems the way of usefulness most suitable to me, if I should recover my strength,¹ I mean to resume it as soon as I can; and I hope in Christ, through whose goodness every opportunity of improvement is given, that he will not suffer these opportunities to become hindrances to my advancement in the knowledge of him. Let us pray to be taught to feel, that all earthly knowledge is mere dross and dung, in comparison with the most excellent knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and then I trust we may pursue, without abusing it, only taking care never to neglect any present duty, or any spiritual duty for it.'

But we will here give some large extracts from an unpublished Treatise 'On the Intellectual, Moral, and Religious uses of Mathematical Science,' as conveying her full and matured sentiments upon this important subject.²

¹ See note p. 323.

² We subjoin an analysis of this Manuscript, which will give some view of the extent, general accuracy, and spiritual character of Miss Graham's mind. Introduction. CHAPTER I. The Usefulness of Mathematics in learning to reason—Groundwork of Mathematical Sciences. Art of stating a Question—Modes of Demonstration—Analysis—Connection—Art of Simplifying Processes—Intermediate principles. CHAPTER II. The Beneficial Influence of Mathematics upon some parts of the Intellectual and Moral Character—Attention—Abstraction—Penetrativeness and Invention—Arrangement—Moral Habits of Mind. CHAPTER III. The Disadvantages of Mathematical Studies—Engrossing attention of the Pursuit—Contempt or Mistrust of other Evidence—Effect on the Imaginative Faculties. CHAPTER IV. The advantage of Mathematical Science, and of the Cultivation of Reason in general, considered in a religious point of view. CHAPTER V. A review of the Disadvantages and Temptations to which the religious Student is exposed. In the Introduction she specifies the persons for whom she primarily wrote,—"those who, in the ardor of their pursuit after human learning, are not unmindful of its immeasurable inferiority to "the wisdom which is from above." "To them"—she remarks—"study of every kind presents considerations of higher import than even the intellectual benefits that are reaped from it. The introduction of religion into secular matters is too often censured as impertinent and unseasonable; and many will think it wholly out of place in a work confessedly on science. I can only reply"—she adds—"by the simple confession, that I should grieve to be acquainted with that science, which might not, under God, forward in some way or other the grand object of my existence."

Speaking of study generally, she marks with accurate discrimination, the different principles of the worldly and the Christian student.

'Many and varied are the motives by which the worldly student is actuated. But his views all centre in some way or other in his own person. Self-gratification, self-advancement, self-interest, are mingled with them all. The Christian student is also variously influenced. But he has learned to transfer all his actions to another centre. The glory of his reconciled God is the point on which they all turn, the compass by which they are all directed. The outward conduct of the two characters may present many points of similarity. Their inward intentions are totally and irreconcilably different. The intrinsic excellence of science, its ennobling influence upon the mind, the delights that are to be enjoyed in the pursuit of it, and the benefits that are to be reaped in its attainment;—these are objects common to the man of the world, and to the religious man. But mark wherein the difference consists. With the former they are primary objects of consideration; the latter beholds them only in a secondary point of view. The Christian student is far from despising the advantages of study. He has felt what it is to thirst after knowledge, and he possesses a keen relish for the pleasures of intellect. But he puts all these considerations away from him till he has answered a question of higher importance. His first inquiry is—'How shall I study for God? How shall I render my acquirements subservient to his glory?' If he cannot answer the question to his complete satisfaction, the uneasy recurrence of it will prove a continual drawback to the spirited and successful prosecution of his studies.'

Upon a very prevalent misconception upon this subject she gives the following just remarks:—

'It has been too much the practice with a well-meaning but injudicious portion of the religious world, to decry human learning, as if it were a thing absolutely unchristian and pernicious. They attack it in the gross, and apply to it all that the Scripture has said concerning "the wisdom of this world." They appear to forget, that these censures apply not to the use, but to the abuse, of human learning. Those who "lean to their own understandings," who are "wise in their own conceits," who set human wisdom in the place of the Holy Ghost's teaching—these are the wise and learned, of whom the Scripture affirms, that the things of the kingdom are hid from their eyes.¹ But the description was never meant for the

"Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. vi. 7.) These are the commands of God concerning the momentous truths of Scripture. They leave us very little time for science, *independent of religion*. Every believer in the Bible will endeavor to act in the spirit of these words. He will consider that time as lost, which is spent without regard to eternity; and that learning as useless, which he cannot employ in subservience to heavenly knowledge.' This valuable manuscript was written about two years before her death. She had intended, during her last illness, to have revised it for publication. But increasing weakness, and the overwhelming impressions of the near prospect of eternity, compelled her to relinquish her design.

¹ Matt. xi. 25.

discouragement of those, who pursue human study in a simple, child-like dependence upon God. It sometimes happens, that the young convert, full of religious zeal, and possessed with some vague and ill-defined notion of the worthless and ensnaring nature of human learning, is led by a mistaken sense of duty either entirely to abandon it, or greatly to slacken his efforts in the attainment of it, and so to shut himself out from a wide field of future usefulness.'

Upon the lawfulness of study she draws the line with great precision and Christian simplicity.

' Does the time'—she asks—' you now devote to study, break in upon any known and immediate call of duty? If it does, your way is clearly pointed out. *No prospect of future good can justify you in the neglect of present duty.* Your studies must, according to circumstances, be wholly abandoned, or laid aside, till you can resume them without feeling that conscience is drawing you another way. Perhaps you are ready to exclaim, that "this is a hard saying." You cannot contentedly resign or postpone your hopes of mental improvement. Still less can you consent to hazard the loss of all that you have already acquired. Suffer me to remind you of two points of view, in which it imports you to consider this question.

' I readily admit, that the studies of wordly men may be successful, notwithstanding the evil spirit in which they are prosecuted. "They have their reward." But nothing that you do can prosper, without the divine blessing. This must be the crown of your undertakings, or you labor in vain. If you know anything of the spirit of prayer, you make it your constant request, that all your doings may prosper, as far as they will promote the glory of God, and no further. In answer, then, to your own petition, God must withhold his blessing from your most laudable employments, if they do not lie in the direct path of duty. On this account you have no rational prospect of success. If you do succeed, be assured that some root of bitterness will spring up from the very accomplishment of your purposes. To continue your studies, therefore, under existing circumstances, would be to subject yourself to certain vexation and disappointment.

' On the other hand, I would remind you, that if you simply attend to your duty, and resolutely forego the most beloved pursuits the moment they come into competition with it, there is no fear that you should lose anything by such conduct. He who made and who preserves your intellectual faculties, can surely enable them to retain anything that will be really useful to you. Your small stock of knowledge will, with his blessing, carry you further than the acquisition of the whole circle of human science could do without it. We may affirm of intellectual gains, no less than of those which are gross and tangible, that "a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked."¹ We are commanded to "be careful for nothing, but in everything to make our

¹ Psalm xxxvii. 16.

requests known unto God."¹ You may therefore in faith commit your studies and acquirements to Him. You may freely ask, and confidently expect, that he will take care of them for you, and return them to you, whenever they shall be wanted for his service.'

The lawfulness of study being proved, its expediency, importance, and responsibility are next considered.

'But perhaps the contrary to all this is your case. You feel that you can devote a certain portion of your time to study, without infringing upon any prior and more imperious demand of duty. If it be thus with you, your studies are *undoubtedly lawful*. It only remains to inquire, how far they may be *expedient* for you.

'Of this, you must yourself be the best judge. It must depend on a variety of circumstances—the particular bent of your talent; the opportunities of improvement which lie within your reach; your present situation, or your future prospects of life. Let us suppose that all or any of these combine in such a degree, as to give you reason to hope that your studies may open a door of usefulness. I shall endeavor to convince you, that no fancied dread of the snares and temptations attendant upon human learning ought to deter you from the pursuit of it. In your case the acquisition of knowledge is not merely a permitted employment, but a positive duty. God has made nothing in vain. He has given us nothing, which we may not use to his glory. This we admit without reluctance in reference to every minor blessing, with which his bounty has enriched us. We acknowledge, that our health, time, riches, influence, are all intrusted to us for God's service, and capable of being used to his glory. But do not they make a strange exception to this general admission, who so roundly assert the utter inefficiency of human reasoning, and of human learning? If so many things, which we possess in common with unbelievers, may yet be legitimately improved to the glory of God, why is the understanding to be excepted? Why must that best and fairest of God's common gifts be suffered to lie waste, only because it is a common one? None can deprecate more earnestly than I do the idea, that the unassisted light of human reason can ever make us wise unto salvation. But shall we therefore say, that the reason takes no part whatever in our reception of truth? Remember that he who gives you spiritual teaching is the very same who gave you this human understanding. He gave you not the former to supersede and overpower, but to guide and enlighten, the latter. Both are alike his gifts; and though the one is inferior to the other, and useless without its aid, yet we must neither neglect nor despise him. *Nothing that he gires can be worthless.* So much for reason itself. And as for those parts of human learning, which contribute to strengthen and improve this faculty, *they are also given by God;* means which he has adapted to the fulfilment of no ignoble purpose. We are just as much bound to use those instru-

¹ Phil. iv. 6.

ments, which Providence has placed within our reach for the cultivation of our understandings, as we are bound to attend to the culture of our fields. Nay, unless we deny that our minds are better things than our fields, we are more called upon to *encourage* the growth of the former than of the latter. If God has given you superior faculties, and the means of improving them, there cannot be a more manifest token, that he intends they should be improved. The parable of the talents is never more fairly exemplified, than when, in the way of duty, we go and trade with the natural abilities which our Divine Master has distributed to us, till we can bring them back to him with the grateful acknowledgment—"Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds."¹

"If, then, you are possessed of superior powers of mind, remember, that the source from whence they emanate is divine. Esteem the gift very highly for the Giver's sake; and seek to bring it to that perfection, of which he has made it susceptible. Use your talents, as not abusing them. Keep them in the dependent, subordinate station which they are intended to occupy. Expect not from them more than they are capable of performing. But expect something from them. Do something with them. Cannot you find any use for them? Take them to God. He has large fields for their employment. There is ample room in his vineyard. Pray that he would send you forth to labor in some way or other in that plenteous harvest, whose laborers are so few. There is nothing so sweet, as this simple committal of your way to one, who is infinitely able to guide and protect you in it. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."² Then they become paths of usefulness indeed. The most brilliant fancy, the profoundest judgment, the clearest understanding, the most extensive learning, are *in themselves* less than nothing. But entreat the blessing of God upon them; and you shall find they will be worth just so much as he pleases. The infidel exerts the whole force of his understanding, blinded as it is by the god of this world, in opposing the doctrine of the cross. Let yours, illumined by a beam from the fountain of light, be no less unequivocally devoted to the service of the cross. Think not the time lost that you spend in study, if you are studying in and for God. Do not say—"I will lay aside the vanity of human learning, and trust only to the divine teaching for powers of sound argument and appropriate expression." You might with equal justice say—"I will abandon the superfluous toil of ploughing my lands, and confide in Providence for a plentiful crop." It is true in both these cases, that the increase cometh from God only; but it is no less true, that he will have the planting and the watering to be ours. God will not help you, if you refuse to help yourself. The trust of the slothful is an impious and a foolhardy trust. His mind, like his vineyard, shall be grown over with weeds.

¹ Luke xix. 12—16.

² Proverbs iii. 6.

'In intellectual, as well as in spiritual gifts, "the Spirit divideth unto every man severally as he will." Thus we read that "Bезaleel was filled with the Spirit of God, in all manner of workmanship, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and the embroiderer."¹ And if these meaner talents come directly from him, how much more the nobler properties of the understanding! Are you indebted to his bounty for the possession of a piercing and commanding intellect, and strong powers of reason? I am sure he did not give them to you for nothing. Why fold that napkin round them? It is your Lord's treasure. What possible right have you to "bury it in the earth?" Do what you will with your own, if indeed you can find anything which is your own. But beware how you trifle with what is his. He is coming, and will expect to "receive it with usury."²

'Consider—had those powers of mind belonged to you as the bondman of Satan, how would you have toiled to perfect them for his service! How much mischief would you have contrived to do with them! And shall "the Lord's freeman" take no pains to improve his talents in his Redeemer's cause? Shall no good be done with them, now that they are Christ's? It is in truth a strange doctrine, that they must lie dormant, because Satan has no longer any claim upon their exertion.

'Why is it, that we have such a dread of calling in the aid of our reasoning powers? Is it not because we look upon reason as something of our own? If we reason in faith, is it not the Spirit of our Father speaking within us, just as much as in any other mode of addressing the unconverted? If we employ human means only so far as we have the warrant of Scripture, of past experience and of present providences; if we cultivate our faculties in the humblest and simplest dependence upon God; surely this is neither making flesh our arm, nor "leaning to our own understanding."³

Some difficulties connected with study are then discussed in interesting connection with Christian principles.

'I cannot but attribute many of the difficulties which perplex and obstruct the Christian student, to his not studying sufficiently in faith. We do not pursue our intellectual contemplations in the same simple, child-like dependence, which we are sometimes enabled to carry into our other duties. We make study an employment too entirely secular. We are apt to consider it as something wholly apart from religion. It is one of those subjects, upon which we do not permit ourselves to converse freely with our heavenly Father. To apply to him at every step for counsel and assistance, would convey to us an idea of presumption. We are afraid to trifle with the majesty of God, by expecting that he will take an interest in the mere earthly improvement of the intellect. That he both gave us this intellect, and bestowed on us the means of its cultivation, is admitted by us beyond the possibility of a doubt. We

¹ Exodus xxxv. 30—35. ² Matthew xx. 27. Luke xix. 20—23. ³ Proverbs iii. 5.

adore the bounty which has adorned and enriched us. But we hesitate to believe in a condescension which shall stoop to notice the petty progress of each minute portion of this intellect, and make its daily and hourly advancement the object of benevolent concern. I would not, my beloved fellow Christians, utter one single expression which might impair your veneration for the Divine Majesty. But in this timid reserve I perceive no marks of genuine veneration. Your privilege is to draw near to God, with the tender reverence, the sacred familiarity of a beloved child. To shrink from his presence with the retiring fearfulness of a slave, is to dishonor the scripture representation of his attributes. And in which of your earthly affairs can you hope that the benevolence of your Father will be interested, if not in the cultivation of your reason? It is the gift by which he has distinguished you from the rest of his earthly creation. It is that which stamps you with the impress of Divinity, which tells you, you are born to immortality. The immensity of condescension by which the Most High bends his regard to any of our paltry concerns, is indeed beyond conception, as it is beyond praise. But if, where all is so unworthy, I might dare to mention one thing as less unworthy of his notice, it would be the progress of the mind. We "are fearfully and wonderfully made."¹ But our intellectual faculties are the surpassing wonder, the crowning excellence of God's creation. The countless worlds that are scattered over the infinity of space, declare the glory of God. The magnificence which created, the strength which upholds, the wisdom which governs the mighty system, afford inexhaustible matter of wonder and adoration. But the intellect, which is able to reflect upon all this, is something far more admirable, in which the glory of God is more greatly conspicuous. The original formation of reason is not, however, more wonderful, than the improvement of which it is capable. A man of a highly cultivated understanding appears altogether a being of a different order from one wholly destitute of the advantages of education. Reason, as it is the noblest of our faculties, so it is the most capable of being conducted to a high degree of perfection. And God is glorified in the perfection of his works. When therefore you cannot confidently look for communion with God in the exercises of your understanding; when you are afraid to expect his co-operation in the use of the meanest of those human aids which he has given you for its improvement, it can only be accounted for in two ways. This hesitation proceeds either from the absence of a religious motive, or from an infirmity of faith. If you have no decidedly religious motives for your studies, I do not see how, with any color of propriety, you can devote yourself to them at all. I am not surprised to hear that doubts and difficulties throng your path. But if you are seeking to cultivate your understanding with a single eye to God's glory, you may so conduct each one of your literary employments as to

¹ Psalm cxxxix. 14.

enjoy his presence all the time you are engaged in it. You may draw near to God even in your studious hours. He will not despise anything that you do for him. His love accepts your worthless services with as much complacency as the princely obedience of an angel. I repeat it ; to study in faith, *in a humble, simple, child-like faith*, removes every perplexity and temptation incident to its pursuit. Your employments will then cease to appear altogether secular. Cultivating your reason as God's gift, and assured that he beholds not with indifference your feeble attempts to glorify him in this greatest wonder of his creative power ; its commonest exercises will become in a measure sacred as the exercises of religion. Spiritual improvement, with no lingering step, will accompany your intellectual progress. "Holiness to the Lord" will be written upon the most trivial of your studies.'

The influence of a vain-glorious spirit, as the canker upon this holy principle of faith, is pointedly illustrated.

'When once the thought of what men will say of us is permitted to mingle with our studies, all spiritual comfort in them is at an end. Our faith must necessarily languish. It can no longer be a living faith—an active principle. "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another ?" was the severe rebuke of Jesus to the vain-glorious Pharisees.¹ When I observe a Christian delighted with the homage that is paid to his eloquence, his judgment, or his taste—should he tell me, that his "love is not waxing cold"—that his faith is as strong as when none but God cared for his obscure name, I should be beyond measure astonished at such a circumstance, if, indeed, I could credit its reality. But in truth, the assertion only proves that the man's heart must be already "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin ;" or that he has never known what true faith is ; for "how can he believe," so long as he is "receiving honor from men ?"²

The snare of self-indulgence connected with study, is most profitably treated.

'I have all along supposed, that you are studying with a view to the benefit of others, rather than to your own gratification. Yet even in this case self-indulgence may insinuate itself into your pursuits. If you possess a talent for them, they will prove so attractive to you, that you will become attached to them for their own sake. You will be tempted to prolong your pleasing employments, and suffer them gradually to steal something from the time appointed for other duties. We have already touched upon the absorbing nature of our mathematical studies, and the intellectual disadvantages, which ensue from giving way to their silent encroachments.

¹ John v. 44.

² To one of her correspondents she expresses her own perplexity about continuing her studies on account of the snares which she had found in them. 'I reflect that study has been to me like the stuff of Achan, beneath which was concealed the cursed thing. I know that my cursed thing is self-love, and seeking my own will, honor, pleasure, and wisdom—and not those of Jesus.' See also her letter, March 22, 1827, p. 26.

These, however, are of small moment, when compared with their corroding influence upon our spiritual enjoyment. An excessive fondness for these abstruse meditations, a habit of indulging in them for their own sake, will be as a worm at the root of our communion with God. A lamentable declension from his ways, will be the probable consequence. By insensible degrees the thoughts of our literary pursuits will begin to mingle with our serious meditations. Then, the hour of study will break in upon the hour of prayer, and perhaps in time may totally interrupt or supersede it. Who can tell the train of evils, which will follow such an intermission of our spiritual watchfulness? When prayer is omitted, study is unsanctified. Every selfish motive has free permission to enter; nay, is invited, as it were, to take possession of the heart, whose sentinel has thus deserted his post. And with what impudent excuses do we entertain conscience all the time! ‘I am just now so occupied, that I am scarcely in frame for prayer. Were I to attempt it, I should find it impossible to disengage my thoughts from the busy, perplexing reflections, which have taken fast hold of them. When I have followed out these investigations to some satisfactory conclusion;—when I have considered this or that point a little more fully; when I have conquered this difficulty, or corrected that mistake;—then my mind will be in a placid, uninterrupted frame. Then shall be my hour of prayer. I shall then betake myself to my spiritual duties with tranquillity and delight; whereas, now they would be a weariness, a formality.’ Thus the hour of prayer is put off, to “a more convenient season.” Our contemplations detain us longer than we had anticipated. The evening shades thicken round us; still we are deeply engaged in our inquiry; still unsatisfied with the result. Midnight surprises us at our labors; and at last the lateness of the hour warns us to repose, before we have found time to pray. A sense of languor and drowsiness—the natural result of our intense mental exertions—either quite prevents our devotions, or compels us to insult God with a prayer from which the heart is absent. We retire to rest with the painful feeling that we have lost a day. For every Christian must be sensible, that he cannot rob God of his portion of the day, without robbing himself of the whole. Still the deceitfulness of sin will follow us with a lying consolation. ‘It is but one day; to-morrow I shall awake, refreshed, and my first thoughts shall be with God.’ Let us not silence conscience with this deceitful plea. If I am not greatly mistaken, this one lost day is the forerunner of many more. Our foot has begun to slide, our steps to decline. To a heart prone to depart from God, this retrograde motion is natural and easy, while the effort to regain a forward progress is immensely difficult. The sin to which we have yielded to-day, will revisit us to-morrow with more urgent solicitations. Self, having obtained the indulgence of one day, will plead hard for another. To make no more than one deviation from the straight path, is infinitely more difficult than not to deviate from it at all. “The backslider in heart shall be

filled with his own ways.”¹ Perhaps the very circumstance of having a religious motive for study, may then be used by us as a cloak to hide our defection. ‘All my pursuits are designed to fit me for engaging in God’s service. I cannot therefore go very much out of the way of duty, by devoting to them a little more time than prudence might otherwise have dictated. My present diligence will one day be turned to account in the cause of religion; it cannot, therefore, be wholly misplaced.’ Thus, in the plenitude of self-indulgence, we can talk to ourselves about our zeal for the Lord of Hosts. Our conduct resembles that of the priests, who “offered polluted bread upon the altar, and then said, ‘Wherein have we polluted thee?’”² If we would offer any acceptable service to God, it must not be thus defiled with self. “Hath the Lord as great delight in” our worthiest pursuits, “as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” We are told that “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”³ Our poor worthless attempts in the cause of our Redeemer can be of no value, but as they are accepted by God through his intercession. How foolish then to imagine that we can succeed, while we neglect thus offering them to God in frequent and faithful prayers! If we will work in our own strength, we must expect to be left to such success as our own strength is able to insure.

‘Do you, upon serious reflection, perceive, that you are now yielding in any way to this self-indulgent temper? Let me earnestly recommend a temporary cessation, if possible, from the employments that have ensnared you. A month, a week, in some cases even a day, rescued from your too fondly cherished occupations, and devoted to earnest prayer for future preservation and direction, may enable you to resume them without danger. But, as you value your peace and spirituality of mind, beware of returning to them, till you experience so much sweetness in heavenly things, as to make the very best of earthly things appear trifling and insipid in the comparison. The memory of Henry Martyn is sacred to every Christian student. The rule by which he regulated his literary pursuits, deserves to be called the golden rule of study. Let us carry it into all the parts of human learning. It will strip them of every excessive and ensnaring attraction. ‘So deep’—says his biographer—‘was his veneration for the word of God, that when a suspicion arose in his mind, that any other book he might be studying was about to gain an undue influence over his mind, *he instantly laid it aside; nor would he resume it, till he had felt and realized the paramount excellence of the Divine oracles.*’

She adverts to what she had said above,⁴ as suggesting a safeguard against some temptations of self-sufficiency and self-dependence.

‘The only effectual remedy I have met with, is, to consider human reason and spiritual teaching in one respect exactly in the

¹ Prov. xiv. 14.’

² Malach ii. 7.

³ 1 Sam. xv. 22.

⁴ Pages 27, 28.

same point of view: I mean, as both freely bestowed by God, to be increased, continued, or suspended at his pleasure. I would consider every little improvement in my studies; the smallest extension of my intellectual powers; the least ray of light that shines in upon my natural reason, when engaged in the commonest earthly speculations;—all these I would consider as coming just as directly and absolutely from the Spirit of my God, as I do those sacred influences which inform and comfort my spiritual existence. Ceasing to look upon reason as our own, we should cease to lean upon it with a misplaced confidence. What we expect from it would be expected from the God to whom it belongs, not from ourselves, who have no right in it. The only way to preclude all glorying and trusting in our own things, is, *to have nothing of our own*. Then, *when all is God's*, we can neither confide too much, nor expect too largely. Thus David acted. He said—"I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me." Did he therefore resign the use of the sword and of the bow? No: but he ascribed the strength which moved his arm in wielding them to God,—"It is God that girdeth me with strength"—"He-teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."¹ There is nothing so reasonable or so delightful as this unreserved ascription of all our intellectual powers to "God our Maker, who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven."² He who thus realizes the property of God in his reasoning faculties, may without arrogance indulge in anticipation of their usefulness, which to a weaker faith, would seem the height of presumption. It is not that he esteems the instrument too highly; but that, viewing it as *God's instrument*, he can set no bounds to its efficiency. He does not imagine that his own arm can bring victory. But through God he knows he shall do valiantly. He enters deeply into the prophet's feelings—"I cannot speak, for I am a child." But the answer of the Lord is graven upon his memory—"Whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak."³ He is ready to exclaim with Moses—"Who am I, that I should go upon the Lord's errand? I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." But his diffidence vanishes before the firm assurance that God "will be with his mouth, and teach him what to say."⁴ To cultivate our reasoning powers with this absolute hopelessness of their single efficacy, and these large expectations from them as instruments in the hand of God, is to bring a certain blessing upon all that we do with them. Hope nothing for yourself. Think nothing too great to hope from the bounty of your God. A firm adherence to this simple rule would enable you to bring your reason to the highest degree of perfection; for God will honor those who thus honor him. "Cease then from your own wisdom." "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding."⁵ Sure I am that if your

¹ Psalms xliv. 6; xviii. 32; cxliv. 1.

⁴ Exodus iii. 11; iv. 10—12.

² Job xxxv. 11.

⁵ Proverbs xxiii. 4; iii. 5.

³ Jeremiah 1. 6, 7.

trust be thus in the Lord, he will teach you "excellent things in counsels and knowledge." You shall both "know the certainty of the words of truth," and be able to "answer the words of truth to them that send unto you."¹—Again, 'It is the perfection of intellectual enjoyment to receive reason entirely as the gift of our God, and every improvement of it, as a fresh token of his love. Every thing is good, must be good, if we view it in this light. How shall it not be good, if it comes directly from our Father's hand? How shall it not be very good, if sanctioned by our Father's blessing? You know that "a gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth."² And then—"the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich; and he addeth no sorrow with it."³ The poorest trifle becomes valuable, if it be the gift of love. But reason is itself a precious stone, a costly gem. When received as a gift it becomes a charmed stone, a talisman to shield from harm, and to insure prosperity. Only acknowledge all your earthly acquirements in this light, and you shall find, that, whichever way you turn them, success shall attend your endeavor. Regard every one of your mental faculties as given to you by creating love. Rejoice in the gift, because redeeming love has restored it to you with a sevenfold blessing. Here is a shield of love, if the shield of faith appear insufficient for your defence. For will not you earnestly guard against the abuse of a thing so given and so blessed?

Her encouragement and advice in the resistance of self-indulgent temptations is truly excellent.

'It is encouraging to reflect, that, if "you are Christ's, all things are yours."⁴ Whatever talents he has given you are yours, freely to use and improve. *They are also his*; therefore you may confidently expect, that he will get glory to himself out of them. And this, if I mistake not, is your wish. Your acquirements are of no value in your eyes, except as you can use them for Christ. Begin, then, and end all your studies with him. Seek to find communion with God in every one of them. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to the glory of God."⁵ The curse which clings to the best of earthly things, and which once shed its baneful influence on all your intellectual faculties, is now taken away in Christ Jesus. Once perhaps your talents might have made you a splendid mischief, a brilliant pest, to society. Now if you use them in faith, they shall be an instrument of healing and of blessing.'

The following closing remarks place the balance between intellectual and Christian wisdom with admirable clearness and beauty.

"On the whole, in attempting to decide upon the true merits of human learning, my readers will not acquit me of the charge of inconsistency, unless they bear in mind the twofold principle upon

¹ Proverbs xxii. 20. ²¹.

² Ibid. xvii. 8.

³ Ibid. x. 22.

⁴ 1 Corinthians iii. 22, 23.

⁵ Colossians iii. 17. 1 Corinthians x. 31.

which my assertions are founded, and from which I hope I shall not appear to have deviated. On the one hand, I conceive that to enlarge and strengthen, to cultivate and refine, to enrich and beautify the intellect, is of all the objects of mere earthly attainment, incomparably the most worthy. Viewing study in this light, I cannot but speak in its favor with some degree of liveliness and passion, as one who has tasted, though very slightly, of the benefits which flow from it. On the other hand, when I compare this best of earthly things with the lowest and meanest of heavenly attainments, it sinks ineffably in my esteem; no longer possessing any intrinsic worth, but valuable only from its subserviency to these higher objects. Considering it, therefore, in this point of view, I am exceedingly fearful of overrating its efficacy. I am led to speak of it with the caution due to a pursuit, which is equally capable of becoming a singular blessing, or an extraordinary snare. Thus, when I weigh intellectual cultivation in any earthly balance, I cannot but adjudge to it a decided superiority. But when I place it in the balance of the sanctuary, I perceive that it has no weight at all, but what it derives from the blessings of God on accompanying circumstances. By affixing to human learning any independent value, we take from it that which it really has; for though exceedingly useful as a submissive attendant upon divine knowledge, it can do us nothing but harm, if we permit its entrance as a dominating usurper.

'We should be less apt to set our hearts upon the pleasures of intellect, if we reflected how much they partake of the evanescent nature of all earthly enjoyments. When this little moment which we call life is fled, of what use shall our studies be to us? Our enlarged faculties will then discern in an instant more than a thousand lives of intense application would now enable us to discover. Our earthly pursuits and attachments are among those "childish things, which we shall put away," when we arrive at man's estate. The very best and wisest of them are but the "*summi amores puerorum, qui una cum pretestâ ponentur.*"¹ While, however, we are in this fleeting state of existence, we must not despise those temporary delights and assistances, which the goodness of God has so wonderfully adapted to our imperfection; nor need we fear to avail ourselves of them with due moderation, and a simple dependence upon God's blessing. But never let it be said of the Christian, that he is so much absorbed in "things temporal," as to neglect, for one moment, "the things which are eternal."

The intrinsic excellence of these remarks render an apology for their introduction needless. The high and general importance of the subject, the full development of its true principles, the solid and expanded views, and above all, the Christian wisdom, spiritual simplicity, and unction which pervade the discussion, will commend it to the profitable attention of every intelligent reader. The trea-

¹ 'Choice delights of children, which will be laid aside with their pretesta'—the gown worn by the children of the Roman nobility, till it was changed for the toga.

tise itself (the writer here speaks from more competent judgment than his own) might probably be considered by men of science, as not formed upon the more approved system of mathematical study; and, though displaying much power and clearness of mind, is occasionally inaccurate in definition and illustration. The practical and excursive remarks (judging from the preceding extracts, and some others hereafter to be adduced) will however be generally considered to possess no common value.

The writer has been induced to extract so largely from this instructive manuscript, chiefly with a view to two important classes of persons in the present day. In this era of religious excitement, the minds of a large mass are at work, inquiring, or rather speculating in a feverish state of restlessness and perplexity. Their feelings are interested, animated, and more or less intensely occupied with the engrossing subjects now brought before the church. Yet often--among the young especially--whether from defect of education or of mental cultivation, their judgments have little power of discrimination; their principles are confined; and their profession mainly characterized by spiritual dissipation, which exposes them to the besetting snares of a disputatious temper, self-conceit, and self-delusion. To such we would strongly recommend the principles, obligations, and advantages of Christian study, which Miss Graham has so admirably laid out before them. The solid influence of these intellectual habits upon her own character, furnishes the most satisfactory illustration of their importance. So far from diverting her attention from the supreme concerns of eternity, they enabled her, through Divine teaching, the more steadily to concentrate her interest in habitual, enlivening, and practical contemplation.

To those among us, whose habits and pleasures are found in the field of intellect, we cannot but observe, how much they may learn from this highly-gifted saint, of that "simplicity and godly sincerity," that careful inspection of motives, that watchful subordination of natural indulgence to the supreme object of the glory of God, which can alone exclude the blast of Divine jealousy from these legitimate sources of enjoyment. All her views of science were received through a spiritual medium, and elevated her soul to the hallowed atmosphere of communion with her God. The spirit of prayer was the constant guard upon her intellectual studies. Never did she enter upon the daily course of tuition with her young cousin without earnestly imploring the blessing of her heavenly Father. We have already seen a specimen of her spirit of supplication on this interesting subject, upon which it will be well for the student to meditate, till his heart becomes deeply imbued with its simple spirituality and enlargement.¹ How delightful again is the pattern set forth in one of her letters! Speaking of some perplexi-

¹ See her Prayer before Study, pp. 22, 23.

ties relative to the pursuing of her studies, she adds—‘I am now resolved, God helping me, to give this week to prayer; presenting each of my studies to Jesus, that he may prosper and sanctify it by his Spirit, take from it all self-love, and cause me in all my employments, even in the least, to aim at his glory, and to labor in his name. Join with me in this prayer.’¹ Not less instructive is the practical spirit that pervaded her studies. Nothing was done for self-indulgence. Her pursuits were only valuable, in proportion as they were consecrated. In everything “to her to live was Christ.” Nothing besides seemed worthy the name of life. Nothing seemed to command her interest independent of this great object. To a correspondent, who had acquired her sentiments relative to the cultivation of her mind, she writes—‘I think it may be done, *with a prayer, however, and a resolution, that all that we do shall one day be employed in the service of Christ. I think the only thing, is never to lose sight of this great object. And to this end I know no other means than that of making it a subject of prayer.* I have often been prevented from praying for success in study, because I thought it was better only to mention spiritual wants at the throne of grace. *But I now think, that after having asked a blessing upon our common occupations, we are less likely to forget the end, which alone can enable us to follow them without danger.*’ Apart from this holy simplicity of principle, (the exclusive character of the Christian Student,) the subtle temptation begins to operate of preferring talent to sound piety; ‘learning,’ as Mr. Baxter tersely remarks—‘is but the pleasing of the fancy in the knowledge of unnecessary things;’² intellectual pleasures are purchased at the fearful expense of the loss of heavenly communion with God. In the cultivation of this spirit, we shall be enabled to honor our God, and to receive his needful aid in literary as well as in religious pursuits. The solid advantages of study will thus be safely enjoyed, the glory of our God and Saviour will be clearly manifested, and his presence realized to the intelligent and active faith of his servants.

But in returning to Miss Graham, we may add, that her studies were not confined to the severer branches of knowledge. She had cultivated an acquaintance with the Roman classics with considerable success.

To one of her correspondents she recommends the study of the Latin Grammar, as the means of a clear understanding of ‘that noble language,’ and of ‘ennobling the intellect by the reading of the poets and historians of that language.’ Two other advantages she notices—that of a more distinct and enlarged acquaintance with our own ‘language; in great part deduced from the Latin,’

¹ See her Prayer before Study, just alluded to. Baxter’s Address to the Blessed Spirit (quoted in another part of this volume) gives a fine illustration of the same self-abased, dependent frame—‘Without thee, books are senseless scravels, studies are dreams, learning is a glow-worm, and wit is but wantonness, impertinence, and folly.’

² Reasons for the Christian Religion. Part II. c. xii.

and that of forming a good style, adding—‘that the English style of a person well instructed in Latin acquires great richness and fertility from the number of classical and energetic words of which it is composed.’ While however in her manuscript she points out the substantial advantages of this instructive field of intellect, she does not fail to advert to the restriction which sound Christian judgment is constrained to impose upon an indiscriminate indulgence. ‘If,’ she observes, ‘we cultivate classic literature with a view only to increase our fund of critical knowledge, we shall miss many of the benefits which we might have derived from pursuing it with a more valuable and extensive design. The true ends of that fascinating study are to impart chasteness and elegance to the style, to enrich the mind with manly sentiments, beautiful images, and poetical associations.’ She elsewhere recommends the cultivation of this field of literature as ‘a corrective to’ what she calls ‘the cold and jejune expression, which marks the style of the mere mathematician. I acknowledge,’ she adds, ‘the Christian objections that are urged, not without weight, against the study of the ancient authors.’ I am only advocating them under proper restrictions, and with due moderation. Thus guarded from abuse, let them walk hand in hand with the more abstruse sciences. They will mutually aid and correct each other. A high degree of classic elegance is consistent with strong powers of sound argumentation. The combination forms a style of reasoning as pleasing as it is convincing. The simplicity of a mathematical style is thus kept from degenerating into poverty, and its cautious correctness is not permitted to stiffen into a frozen sterility.’

In the field of modern literature and taste, she was perfectly familiar with the French, Italian, and Spanish languages. For the first two she had proper masters. The last she learnt from a Castilian, who was introduced to her father’s house, in exchange for teaching him her own language. In order to improve herself in the knowledge of the languages, she made considerable use of them in mutual correspondence with her young friends. For the same purpose she translated Goldsmith’s Vicar of Wakefield (a work not congenial to her taste, but selected as a good specimen of English style) into French, Latin, and Spanish, and commenced an Italian Version. She made a similar use of Gil Blas, to perfect herself in the Spanish language for an important object, which will shortly be noticed at length. She appears, however, to have ultimately relinquished this work, for a reason equally characteristic of her good sense and Christian simplicity. ‘Should I become’—she writes to her correspondent—‘perfect mistress of the

¹ These objections, so far as they are valid, refer mainly to the mode of study or instruction, without any reference to the Divine standard of the book of God; thus leaving the mind open to the influence of all that is corrupt both in principle and practice. Under a wise Christian discipline, however, much enlargement of mind and varied interest will be gained from this source; added to what is of primary moment,—the sound learning so necessary to a just interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.

pleasing and pregnant style of Gil Blas (of which I intend to write at least two volumes), it would be almost too light for the serious subject on which I wish to write.' In the same spirit the project even of these two volumes seem to have been quickly laid aside. The next week she writes to the same correspondent—'I told you that I had begun to write Gil Blas very diligently. *But yesterday I thought of the folly of thus employing myself about a work in which I wished Christ to do all. I am therefore determined to give the remainder of this week and the following to reading the Bible with prayer.*'

The best English writers were familiar to her, especially the standard works connected with the Philosophy of the Mind. She appears to have made herself thoroughly acquainted with the principles of Locke. She speaks in one of her letters of reading his important Essay on the Conduct of the Understanding for the twentieth time with renewed interest, and recommends to her correspondent the study of this work with great earnestness, as the means of giving her an increased thirst for pursuits purely intellectual. Stewart was read with much improvement to herself. Butler's Analogy also was upon her first shelf. The following letter to her cousin gives a lively and intelligent view of her interest in these valuable writers.

'Hastings, July 26, 1823.

'I am very glad that you like Butler. I found, as you do, not only that he is humble himself, but that he inspires his readers with sentiments of humility. He shows them the littleness of human reason, and how weak it is, where it will not submit to the light of revelation. I will tell you what the good Stewart has done for me. I have long felt that all the efforts I have made to obtain true knowledge have been almost useless. Stewart has shown me the reason of this. It is because I have always allowed the greatest confusion of my ideas. I have never arranged them. He has shown me that my mind is like a large sack filled with rubbish of all kinds, and where perhaps something that is useful may be found: but all is packed together in so confused a manner, that whosoever sought for it would be seeking a needle in a bottle of hay. I am almost in despair; however, I am resolved to make every effort to arrange a little better the confused mass; and I am more than ever convinced, that the only sure way of having the head filled with clear and well-defined ideas is, to accustom oneself to put one's thoughts upon paper. I must tell you a resolution which I desire to execute; it is to write down from time to time all the new ideas and facts, whether original or acquired by reading or conversation, which I have gained. By doing this we should know the progress which our minds make; and we should not forget, as we now do, the ideas which pass through the mind without making any impression, but which might be very useful if gathered together, and reserved to a proper occasion.'

Her acquaintance with the Greek language only extended to the reading of the Greek Testament. The further progress in this department of literature was hindered by her application to other studies necessary for the superintendence of the education of her cousin. She was proposing to commence the study of Hebrew, but increasing indisposition precluded her from renewing her habits of application in any fresh track of interesting exercise.

Miss Graham studied the theory of music with much attention, and wrote a short but correct development of its principles¹ for the use of a young cousin, then preparing for the situation of governess, and whom she had in part educated for this important sphere with anxious pains and interest. Apart from this object she would not probably have devoted so large a portion of her valuable time to this study, as it was a matter of frequent concern to her, to observe the preponderance given to this elegant and fascinating science, above the more solid and useful accomplishments.

In some of her more lively exercises of mind she took up the subject of chemistry with great delight, making long extracts from the books which she read, and going over every part till she thoroughly understood it. Without having any more definite object for this study, she felt that some absorbing occupation of this character was necessary to beguile the long and wearisome hours of sickness. For the same object botany also attracted her attention. Thus with various and successive occupations her mind was always maintained in active, intelligent, and profitable exercise. A striking feature of her character (one which entered into her recreations equally with her studies, and which formed the basis of her high mental superiority) was a total concentration of every power of thought and feeling in the object of pursuit immediately before her.² Indeed, as her father observes, ‘she followed Solomon’s advice in everything she undertook—“Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might!”’³

Her peculiar singleness of aim preserved her, in the midst of her intellectual enjoyments, from the baneful influence of self-indulgence, and stimulated her to apply her literary pursuits to valuable practical purposes. Her great object in the study of the Spanish

¹ A Letter to a young Pianoforte player.

² One of her letters gives a graphical picture of this remarkable concentration of mind.

³ Plymouth, May 10, 1825.

‘When the fury of learning takes possession of me, I cannot think of anything else. If I am seized with a fit for studying any particular thing, I cannot give my mind to any other studies, however much I usually delight in them. I now wish to study Spanish and Music. But I am so carried away with my ancient mania for Mathematics, that, although my head aches, and I cannot think without inconvenience of anything, I am perpetually puzzling my brains to resolve questions, which will never be of any use to me. It is said, that everything is given for some good. I cannot imagine why I have been endowed with this invincible propensity to a study, which is always diverting me from more useful and feminine occupations.’ This letter, it will be remarked, was written several years before her Treatise on Mathematical Study, and before the important intellectual and moral benefit of that study, which her Treatise so fully develops, had opened to her mind.

³ Eccles. ix. 19.

language, was to obtain a medium of communication with the Spanish refugees. The discovery of a strong tincture of infidelity among them, combined with the recollection of her own fall, to excite a compassionate, earnest, and sympathizing concern on their behalf. The second part of 'The Test of Truth' opens with an exquisitely touching view of her feelings on this painful subject. Indeed the work contains the substance of her communications with some of those interesting but unhappy men. It was sent to them with much and earnest prayer upon the eve of their departure from England. She had intended to have translated some of the most striking extracts from Paley and other writers upon the Evidences of Christianity; and in one of her letters she mentions having no less than eleven English volumes before her mind for this purpose. Finding, however, that Paley had been translated, she purchased the work, and sent it to her Spanish friends with her own.

The following notices will give an interesting view of the exercises of her mind and faith, which were strongly called out towards these objects of her compassion, after she was removed from immediate intercourse with them.

'Sept. 8, 1825.

'As to my Spanish, we have been so busy about the schools, that I have not been able to do much. *But I find a delightful confidence, that this book having been the suggestion of Christ, and belonging to him and not to me, will be blessed by him.* I have read one part of 'Las Ruinas,' and in reading it I was struck with the reflection, that the best answer would be a continual reference to the word of God. I thought therefore of placing my observations on the blank pages, and of filling the margin of the printed paper with references. I beseech you to pray, that if I be not a fit instrument for the conversion of the souls of these poor Spanish exiles, the Holy Spirit would be pleased to raise up some other.'

Miss Graham obtained a copy of the book, interleaved with blank paper for the insertion of her remarks. It appears, however, from this copy, now in the writer's possession, that she made very little progress in this task, probably thinking that the simple argument of "The Test of Truth" was better adapted for her purpose.

'April 9, 1827.

'Last week my blessed Master gave me the power of writing in his name to the poor Spaniards. I have written three sheets in English. But as I have not studied Spanish for a long time, I find myself in some difficulty, and must give this week to the language. Next week I hope to translate what I have written, and to send it to you; if you will oblige me by seeing it put into their hands. My faith in seeing them converted to God increases every day. At present, "the strong man armed keepeth his palace, and his goods

¹ Volney's Ruins of Empires, translated into the Spanish—an infidel work of much authority with her Spanish friends.

are at peace." But I have confidence given me from heaven, that I shall see the "stronger than he," who will conquer him, and "take from him all his armor wherein he trusted."¹ I may not perhaps see this while I am here; but I shall not rejoice the less, because I see it in heaven.'

About a month afterwards, we find her mind deeply exercised upon this work and labor of love.

' May 5, 1827.

' I wrote the Spanish book in the name of Jesus, and in the belief that he would give me a spirit and a wisdom, which by nature I do not possess. I had a strong faith in the promises of God, to manifest himself in his own time to his own elect. But in the way of preparing to send it, my faith vanishes, and I have now only "an evil heart of unbelief."² To say to all the bones in the churchyard at Stoke—" O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,"³ would almost seem to me easier than to say the same thing to souls dead in infidelity. However, I feel that I have courage even for this, since "Jesus is the resurrection and the life," because all the glory will be to him alone; and because he has assured me, that, having confided myself to him, my expectations can never be disappointed.'

The next letter was sent some months afterwards, with 'The Test of Truth,' and 'Paley's Evidences.'

' Dec. 20, 1827.

' I send you Paley, which pleases me very much, with the letter, in which, without entering upon any argument about the Evidences, &c., I have leant upon the simple proposition, that God having promised in the Scriptures to give his Spirit to whoever asks it with sincerity, must either keep his promise, or not be God; and I have endeavored to show them, that according to their own principles they are without excuse, if they neglect to seek their Creator in this manner. But if even now it do not succeed, it has been a blessing to me; it has been the cause of many prayers, of many sweet moments of communion with Jesus. I cannot therefore but hope, that in the time and manner which may please him, my prayers will be answered. I recommend these unhappy people to you. Pray for them often and fervently; possibly amongst them may be found some of those who were "chosen before the foundation of the world."

In another letter formerly quoted, after having begged her friend to join with her in prayer for a blessing upon her studies, she added

¹ Luke xi. 21, 22.

² This book was 'The Test of Truth.' Her care and anxiety for them extended to their temporal, as well as their spiritual distresses. As a token of affectionate sympathy, as well as some acknowledgment for valuable instruction received, she gladly appropriated the proceeds of her musical Tract to the fund raised for their relief.

³ Ezek. xxxvii. 4.

in conclusion,—‘And pray for me, that I may have something to say to those poor Spaniards, and that my love for them may not grow cold.’

The full result of her prayers and “trials of faith” on behalf of her Spanish friends, is among the secrets which “the day will declare.” Meanwhile what Christian can fail to be invigorated by this exhibition of prayer, faith, self-denial, and patient hope in the work of our Divine Master?

Allusion has been already made¹ to a disinterested project which she had formed of devoting herself to the work of tuition. To her cousin she writes, as if her heart was full of it—‘I think of it day and night. The opportunity of my illness appears to me excellent for preparing myself for my plan, *if the ability for putting it into execution should be granted me.*’ Her gracious Lord however was pleased to accept her in the desire,² not in the performance of her work. Protracted indisposition hindered her from giving any definite shape or execution to the plan, which only remains on record, as one among the many instances of the ceaseless activity with which her energies were employed in the service of her Redeemer, and of his Church.

It is natural to expect to see her a “fellow-worker with God,” in the daily course of active devotedness. She was a constant visitor of the poor in the most miserable abodes, under circumstances trying to her delicate frame and tender spirit. For some time she took a daily and somewhat distant walk through an uninviting part of the city, to spend an hour with a dying young woman, whose case had deeply interested her, and to whom there is every reason to believe that she was found the blessed messenger of life and salvation. Her sympathy was much called out by the temporal wants of the poor. Much of her leisure time was employed in working for their benefit. A large chest of useful articles of clothing was constantly kept in her own room, while the opportunities of distribution were always improved as means of spiritual instruction to the objects of her consideration. Her sabbaths were entirely devoted to the service of God. She became a teacher in the Christ Church Sunday School, and though she was often exhausted at the close of the day by the continued excitement of her exertion, yet she ever counted her toil in the work of Christ to be her highest privilege and delight.

Upon her removal from London, the interest of her intellectual mind continued to be called forth in the employment of a village sphere. A deep and habitual constraint of redeeming love regulated every mental effort. Though she diligently improved her retirement in adding to her already well-furnished storehouse; yet she chiefly regarded it as the means of secretly recruiting her strength for the service of God. Hers was not the mind to repose luxuriously in ‘the Castle of Indolence.’ Hers was not the soul that could rest even in spiritual self-indulgence, insensible to the

¹ See page 23, note.

² 2 Chronicles vi. 8.

urgent calls of active duty. Even her delicate health was not suffered to preclude her from the self-denying exercise of Christian devotedness. During the first summer of her country residence, she regularly attended at the parish workhouse at seven o'clock, to explain the Scriptures to the poor previous to the commencement of their daily labor. This, however, like every other "labor of love," was an exercise of her faith, and conflict with the great enemy. She mentions to her cousin the repugnance which at one time she found to this work, and her yielding to the temptation of deferring it from day to day. Yet it was not long before she found the victory of faith over inaction; and gladly did she give the praise to Him, who enabled her to make a successful effort; 'I told them of my intention'—she writes—"to go every morning to pray with them and read the word of God. *My Saviour removed every difficulty out of the way, and caused the women to receive me with the greatest civility.*'

The children of the parish were the objects of constant solicitude. She wrote a few simple addresses for their use. She drew out also questions upon the parables and miracles, for the assistance of the Sunday School Teachers;¹ and, when prevented by indisposition from attending the school, she assembled the children at her own house for scriptural instruction. The young women also in the parish occupied a large share of her anxious interest; and, finding them unwilling to assemble at the same time and place with the children, she appropriated a separate evening for their instruction. She was, as might be supposed, a constant cottage visitor. The following beautiful extract from her mathematical manuscript will show the high and consecrated spirit with which she connected this humble ministration with her intellectual pleasures. Warning her Christian student of the dangerous snare of self-complacency,² she inquires of him—"Do you ever experience this proud internal consciousness of superior genius or learning? God has placed a ready antidote within your reach. The abode of learned leisure is seldom far from the humble dwelling of some unlettered Christian. Thither

¹ Some of these Addresses and Questions have since been published by the Rev. H. A. Simcoe. (Seeleys)

² Her remarks upon self-complacency are so just and searching, that the Writer is tempted to add them in a note:

'*Self-complacency* is another of those temptations, to which the student is peculiarly exposed. He may so far distrust his own heart, as to abstain from "doing anything through strife or vain-glory." He may keep out of the way of human praise. And yet there may be an inward complacency, a proud consciousness of superiority, equally destructive to his growth in grace. He "thinks of himself more highly than he ought to think." He courts not the breath of applause: but he drinks in the intoxicating vapor of self-gratulation and esteem. There are some men, in whom pride stifles the impulses of vanity. If they seem to care little what others think of them, it is because they think so well of themselves. Their own opinion needs no confirmation. Their solitary plaudit is so abundantly satisfactory, that the buzz of admiring multitudes would be a superfluous addition. Can anything like this be found in the disciple of Jesus? Yes—for the law of sin still dwells in his members. Neither this sin, nor any other shall be permitted to have dominion. (Romans vi. 14.) But its assaults will sometimes vex and discompose him. He will be tempted, according to the natural bent of his character, to seek the applause of others, or to rest in his own.'

let your steps be directed. "Take sweet counsel" with your poor uneducated brother. There you will find the man, whom our "King delighteth to honor." His mean chamber, graced with one well-worn book, is as "the house of God, and the very gate of heaven." Observe how far the simplicity of his faith, and the fervor of his love, exceed anything you can find in your own experience, cankered as it is with intellectual pride. God has taught him many lessons, of which all your learning has left you ignorant. Make him your instructor in spiritual things. He is a stranger to the names of your favorite poets and orators. But he is very familiar with "the sweet Psalmist of Israel." He can give you rich portions of the eloquence of one, who "spake as never man spake." He can neither "tell you the number of the stars, nor call them all by their names." But he will discourse excellently concerning "the star of Bethlehem." He is unable to attempt the solution of a difficult problem. But he can enter into some of those deep things of God's law, which to an unhumbled heart are dark and mysterious. He will not talk to you "in the words which man's wisdom teacheth;" but oh! what sweet and simple expressions of Divine love are those which "the Holy Ghost has taught him!" He "knows nothing but Christ crucified;" but this is the excellent knowledge, to which all other knowledge is foolishness. He has "the fear of the Lord; that is wisdom. He departs from evil; that is understanding."¹ When your soul is refreshed by this simple and lowly communion with one of the meanest of God's saints; return to your learned retirement. Look over your intellectual possessions. Choose out the brightest jewel in your literary cabinet. Place it by the side of "the meek and quiet spirit" of this obscure Christian. Determine which is the "ornament of greater price."² Compare the boasted treasures of your mind with the spiritual riches of your illiterate brother. Run over the whole catalogue. Let not one be omitted; the depth of your understanding, the strength of your reasonings, the brilliancy of your fancy, the fire of your eloquence. Be proud of them. Glory in them. You cannot. They dwindle into insignificance. They appear to you "as a drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance."

The following letter gives a beautiful illustration of the truly Christian spirit, with which she inculcated upon her friends the responsibility of persevering effort in the work of God:

‘*Stoke, August 4, 1825.*

'I think that visiting the poor is an excellent help to spirituality of mind, because it shows us our own weakness, when we lose sight for a moment of the strength of Christ. It also brings to light many secret corruptions, of which we were before ignorant. I am very anxious to hear about the Infant School. Do not be discouraged by the cold answers of —. Rather pray for them, that more faith

¹ Job xxviii. 28.

² 1 Peter iii. 4.

may be given to them, and a spirit of love for the souls that are perishing around them. Such a prayer offered in faith by one Christian for another will bring down a blessing upon both. I am very sorry that I was angry with —, instead of praying for her. I do not think that Christians pray enough for each other. Perhaps the Lord is proving your faith and love by making you wait in this cause. If it be so, do not doubt his power to carry you through all you undertake in his name. From the mouth of the children for whom you are interested, he will cause his praises to be sounded. Do "not" then, "be weary in well-doing." If you have not already begun, let me advise you not to begin, till you have given a special time to the Scriptures and to prayer. I desire all our undertakings to be "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Then—referring to her own intention of setting apart the next week for spiritual exercises in reference to her Spanish communications—she asks—"I thought perhaps that you would give next week to these things, and that it would be delightful to me to remember, that we were both thus employed at the same time. But if you cannot do this, pray at the time fixed by us, that I may have grace and faith to pass these days in dedicating myself to this work, and that we may both of us in all that we do be delivered from a self-seeking spirit, and may take every step with our eyes fixed upon the cross of Jesus. I am afraid of annoying you by this mode of speaking of these things. But if you knew how full my heart is of tenderness, while I write, you would pardon the importunity, with which I beseech you to give yourself entirely and without reserve into the hands of Christ. He can give you from the treasures of his grace all the zeal, love, and warmth which you need. All is ours already by virtue of his blood. Let us make use of it. Let us go to him in holy boldness, and ask for all the grace which he is so ready to give." Psalm lxxxi. 10.

The pressure, however, of increasing illness constrained her to relinquish her own habits of personal activity for some time previous to her death. It was her appointed dispensation rather to suffer, than to do her heavenly Father's will; while her solitary hours were cheered by the contemplation of the glorious prospects opening upon her view—"looking for the mercy of her Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."¹

¹ Jude xii.

CHAPTER IV.

FURTHER EXTRACTS FROM HER WRITINGS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

IT is not to be expected, that the quiet tenor of Miss Graham's habits in a retired village could furnish much variety of incident or detail. We shall, however, abundantly compensate for this deficiency by a more full exhibition of her fine, powerful, and spiritual mind, as illustrated in her writings and correspondence.

But this department of our work is too large to be comprehended in one mass. We will therefore set it forth in several distinct divisions, and give her sentiments upon the fundamental *Doctrines of the Gospel*—upon subjects of interesting *Theological discussion*—upon some points of moment connected with *Christian Experience and Profession*—and upon *Miscellaneous Subjects*.

1. HER VIEWS OF THE GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL.

Her apprehensions and statements of the grand fundamentals of the Christian faith were eminently scriptural.

On the humbling doctrine of Original Sin, she justly remarks in a posthumous work :¹—

' It is the very first lesson in the school of Christ : and it is only by being well rooted and grounded in these first principles, that we can hope to go on to perfection. The doctrine is written in Scripture as with a sunbeam. If we do not feel some conviction of it in our own hearts, it affords a sad proof that we still belong to that "generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness."²

After adducing some of the most convincing scriptural evidence, she proceeds forcibly to illustrate the subject by the case of Infants.

¹ "The Freeness and Sovereignty of God's *Justifying and Electing Grace*." Notwithstanding the inversion of Scriptural order in the Title (which her mode of discussion unfortunately required,) and one or two incidental inaccuracies of exposition, its statements of Divine truth are full, clear, encouraging, and practical. The substance of the work was written about four years before her death, in a letter to a serious relative, with the desire to impart to her mind a more clear and comprehensive knowledge of the system of the Gospel. She brought it into its present form during her last illness, and lived only to correct the first two proof-sheets. Her object in publication is stated in her communication to the venerable Minister, to whom she wished to have dedicated the work—" Now that I have experienced the exceeding comfort and delight, which a clear view of God's sovereign, absolute, free, and unmerited salvation affords in the near prospect of eternity, I am very desirous to make my poor testimony to these truths public, in the hope that God will bless it to others. For I know that success "is not of him that planteth, nor of him that watereth, but of God that giveth the increase."

² Prov. xxx. 12, pp. 8, 9.

'Would we know the *reason* of this indelible pollution, which fallen man has transmitted to his latest descendants? let that given by Scripture suffice—"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."¹ But is not the new-born babe innocent? yes, from the commission of actual sin; but not from the pollution of a nature altogether sinful: for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."² Why then is death so often commissioned to snatch away the babe in the first hour of its existence?—why, but because that babe is a sinful creature? Sin, that root of bitterness, has already shot its fibres into the inmost soul. That infant "born of the flesh, is flesh;"³ and "as such cannot please God"⁴—cannot bring forth any other than the accursed fruits of the flesh. As surely as the cockatrice's egg will hatch into a viper, so surely will the babe born of unclean parents, be itself unclean—so surely it will be "by nature a child of wrath, even as others."⁵ And therefore it is as the apostle tells us, that "Death reigneth over all, *even over them that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*"⁶ I entertain not a doubt that these little ones are redeemed by the blood of Jesus: but that they *need* redemption, that they are *sinners*, "children of wrath by nature,"—of this truth I am equally well assured; and every little mound in the church-yard seems to have a voice that tells me so.⁷

Then after citing our Church's recognition of this doctrine in the Ordinance of Infant Baptism, she returns to her scriptural ground of argument.

'The Holy Ghost has instructed the Apostle to give us such a full comment upon the spiritual death we all die in Adam, that we cannot too often read and pray over the following passages: Rom. v. 12, 21; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45, 49; Eph. iv. 22, 24. Col. iii. 9, 10. There are many others, in which our nature in Adam is spoken of, in contradistinction to the new and holy nature we receive in Christ Jesus. So essential is a right understanding of this truth, that until we receive it, many of the most beautiful parts of the Church service must appear just as unintelligible to us as if they were written in an unknown language. Nay—worse than unintelligible—they must seem extremely foolish and ridiculous. How absurd (to an understanding not convinced of the original defilement of our nature) must it appear to talk of remitting an infant's sins; of causing the Old Adam to be buried, and his carnal affections to die in him;⁸ while all the time the bearer thinks that the infant as yet has *no sin*, *no carnal affections*,—while the very existence of the Old Adam or original sin is doubted by him!⁹

The sacred records of Christian experience furnish full confirmation of her humiliating statement.

'Oh! what an unmeaning heap of words,'—she exclaims—'has

¹ Job xiv. 4.

² Rom. v. 12.

³ John iii. 6.

⁴ Rom. viii. 8.

⁵ Eph. ii. 3.

⁶ Rom. v. 14.

⁷ Page 308.

⁸ See the Baptismal Service.

⁹ Page 14.

been handed down to us in the law of Moses, the Psalms of David, the confessions of Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Daniel, Jeremiah, and the rest of God's saints, if that evil nature which caused them to groan did not really exist! Above all—what shall we make of Romans iii. and vii.? What shall we understand by the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit,¹ between the old man and the new man, between the carnal and spiritual affections? Was St. Paul dreaming, when he said—"I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing?"² Was he beside himself, when he declared "that he found in himself a law, that when he would do good, evil was present with him?"³ that, though by Divine grace he had learnt "to delight in the law of God after the inward man, yet still he saw another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members?"⁴ The Apostle of the Gentiles, "who labored more abundantly than they all:"⁵ he, who "had been caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for him to utter"⁶ amongst sinful men; he, who "counted all things but dung, that he might win Christ;"⁷ he, who was "ready, not only to be bound, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus;"⁸ this chosen vessel of mercy, full of zeal and full of love, and *under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost*, so groaned under the burden of the original corruption of his nature—"the law of sin warring in his members;" that he was compelled to cry out—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"⁹ And from the time of Paul there has never been a real Christian, who has not often felt himself constrained to adopt this language, and to say in the anguish of his soul—"who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The remedy, as is usual in Scripture, follows close upon the complaint: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹⁰

From her Mathematical Manuscript we extract the following method of proof of the *total depravity of man*. In speaking of the three modes of demonstration—Inference, Coincidence, and *Reductio ad absurdum*¹¹—she thus applies the last mode to the subject alluded to—' If man be not utterly depraved, he must be in one of these two states—either perfectly good, without any mixture of sin; or good, with some admixture of evil and imperfection. The first of these suppositions carries its own absurdity upon the face of it. The second is plausible, and more generally received. Yet it is not difficult to prove, that if man had any remaining good in him, that is,—towards God—he could not possibly be the creature that he now is. There could not be that carelessness about his eternal welfare, that deadness to spiritual things, which we per-

¹ Gal. v. 17.

² Rom. vii. 18.

³ Ib. v. 21.

⁴ Rom. v. 22, 23.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.

⁷ Phil. iii. 8.

⁸ Acts xxi. 13.

⁹ Rom. vii. 24.

¹⁰ Rom. vii. 25. Page 14.

¹¹ i. e. The contrary hypothesis necessarily involving an absurdity.

ceive in every individual, whose heart has not been renewed by Divine grace. Man would not love pleasure more than God. He would not prefer "the things which are seen and which are temporal" to "the things that are not seen and are eternal." He would not trifle with sin. He would not sneer at holiness. He would not habitually neglect to pray.

'All these things are utterly incompatible with the hypothesis, that man is only partially fallen from God. The very least spark of innate godliness would imply a restless dissatisfaction in what is evil; an importunate longing to be freed from it. The man in whom such a spark of goodness existed, would breathe after lost communion with his Maker. He would prefer God's will and pleasure to his own. "The honor that cometh from God only" would be dearer to him than the most splendid tribute of human applause. Is anything like this to be found in man before his reception of Divine grace? No—He "lives without God in the world;" chooses his own will and pleasure, and seeks his own glory. *He is utterly selfish; therefore he is utterly fallen.*

'We find then that the doctrine of man's partial depravity involves absurd consequences. It leads to conclusions which are wholly at variance with fact. These reflections bring us back to the Scripture statement. We admit that the heart of man may yet be the seat of many noble and tender affections *towards his fellow-men*. *But in regard to God*, we declare his affections to be alienated, his understanding darkened, his will depraved. "There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."¹"

The utter helplessness of man she adduces with great clearness and power, to prove that the work of grace, from its earliest commencement to its final consummation, is "all of God."

'Grace will be given'—she observes—"to all who diligently seek for it. But, if we attend to the Scripture account of every man, woman, and child by nature, we shall find that this seeking also is the *effect following upon grace received; not the cause producing it*. By this I mean to say, that the very act of *seeking grace* proves that *we have received grace already*; and that the very ability to seek, is itself the *free gift* of God's sovereign grace. If "every thought of man's heart is evil, and that continually,"² surely it is not out of that heart that the first desire of any good thing can spring. If, by nature, "there is *none that seeketh after God*,"³ whence can the first attempt to seek him arise, but from free grace drawing us *contrary to nature*? Freely must grace be given to enable us to seek at first; and freely must it be continued, to enable us to go on seeking. I know that *none shall seek the Lord in vain*; *none who come* shall be cast out; *none who believe* shall come short of everlasting life; *none who choose the better part*

¹ Psalm xiv. 2, 3. Rom. iii. 10—12.

² Gen. vi. 5.

³ Rom. iii. 11.

shall have it taken from them;¹ but then *none can seek the Lord, unless he first seek them.*² *None can come, except it be given them of the Father;*—*none can believe, save as many as are ordained to eternal life;* *None can choose Christ, except he first choose them.*³ If, again, we consider the magnitude of the change, which must take place in every sinner's heart before he can truly and earnestly seek God, we shall be convinced that no part of it is properly his own. He must “be born again;”⁴ must become a new creature; *old things must pass away, all things must become new;*⁵ he must “pass from death unto life;”⁶ “from darkness to light—from the power of Satan unto God”—“from going about to establish his own righteousness, to submit himself to the righteousness of God;”⁷ and this, to a proud carnal heart, is the most difficult of all. And who is sufficient for these things? Who but He that first formed us in the womb, can cause us to be born again of the Spirit? Who but He that originally created us, is able to “create us anew in Christ Jesus?” Who but the giver of natural life can give spiritual life; “and quicken those that were dead in trespasses and sins?”⁸

When the Lord of life stood by the grave of Lazarus and said—“Lazarus come forth; and he that was dead, instantly came forth;”⁹ who would say, that this act of lifting himself up was the cause of his coming to life; and not rather, that his coming to life was the cause of his being able to lift himself up? It is thus, when Jesus by his word and Spirit says to the heart of a sinner—“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”¹⁰ Instantly that dead soul arises, and its first act is seeking, or prayer; but this same act of seeking is the *effect* of spiritual life, not the *cause*. We pray because *we are alive, not that we may live.* We cannot quicken ourselves when dead in sin, any more than we can bring a dead body to life. But when Jesus has quickened us, we shall as surely perform all those actions, which demonstrate the soul to be spiritually alive, as a dead body when raised by Divine power, will surely perform all the functions of a living person. Grace, great grace, must be infused, to enable us to seek at all; and He who first gave grace to seek, will give *more* grace in answer to that seeking, thus fulfilling that precious scripture which saith—“To him that hath, shall be given.”¹¹ We neither *begin* nor *carry on* the work of grace in our own hearts. “Jesus is the *author and finisher,*” the *Alpha and Omega,* “of our faith.”¹² From the first spark of grace that faintly glimmers upon us here, to the full blaze of glory which shall burst upon us in heaven; *all, all is his doing;* it is *he* that made us alive (spiritually,) not we ourselves. It is God who both *begins* the

¹ Isaiah xlvi. 19. John vi. 37, 40. Luke x. 42.

² John x. 16. Ezek. xxxiv. 14. Luke xix. 10. Psalm cxix. 176. Eph. ii. 13.

³ John vi. 65; xv. 16. Acts xiii. 48. ⁴ John iii. 3. ⁵ 2 Cor. v. 17.

⁶ 1 John iii. 14.

⁷ Acts xxvi. 18. 1 Peter ii. 9.

⁸ Rom. x. 3.

⁹ Ephesians ii. 1.

¹⁰ John xi. 43, 44. ¹¹ Ephesians v. 14.

¹² Matt. xiii. 12.

¹³ Heb. xii. 2.

good work in us, and also will "perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."¹

Then, after having confirmed her statement by the strong and unequivocal language of the Church, she proceeds to exhibit in connection with it, *the perfect freeness of Divine grace.*

"It is absolutely necessary to a clear and full view of this doctrine, that we ascribe to the *free, sovereign, and unmerited* grace of God, the first desire after him that ever arose in our hearts; as well as the fulfilling of that desire, when expressed in prayer. We must be convinced that *nothing* in the work of salvation is *our own*, but only the gift of God's love to us in Christ Jesus. Christ died for us when we were enemies.² The benefits of his death are applied to us, *for the purpose* of reconciling us, not in consequence of *our* making any advances towards being reconciled. He "died for the *ungodly*," for those who were "*without strength,*"³ without strength to come to Him; without strength to form so much as a wish to come to Him. The *desire* to come is *given for His sake*: the *ability* to come is *given for His sake*; the *acceptance on coming* is an acceptance *for the beloved sake of this beloved Saviour*, "*without whom we can do nothing.*"⁴ Those who say—"Grace will be given if we ask; but then asking must precede or procure the given grace"—are in effect robbing God of much of the glory due unto his name. For the power and the inclination to ask are of themselves a part of the free gift of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus. They are the beginning of God's work in the heart; and to say, that we begin this work, is no other than to say that we can create ourselves anew in Christ Jesus. I will venture to affirm, that if God *waited* to give us his grace till we asked him for it of our own accord, we should go without it to all eternity.

"The great source of error on this head, even amongst serious people, is, that they cannot bring themselves to think they have *nothing of their own* in the work of salvation. Therefore it is, that, when constrained to acknowledge that the grace given them *when they seek*, is from God only; their self-righteousness betakes

¹ Phil. i. 6. Freeness of Grace, pp. 48—51. While however she lays down the fundamental principle, that in the work of salvation "all is of God," she insists upon the necessity of rational means in connection with Divine agency. "The Spirit alone," she observes in her manuscript—"can "convince of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." (John xvi. 8.) But then he does so *by means of our understandings—not in despite of them*. He who first made us reasonable beings, acts upon us in a way suited to our reason. He gives us no new faculties, but enables us for the right use of those which we already have: There cannot be a greater mistake than the separation which some make between the operation of the Spirit, and the process of rational conviction. They are related to each other as the cause to the effect. The Spirit of God alone "guides into all truth," (John xvi. 13,) yet not by urging us on blindfold with headlong impulse. He opens our eyes, and pours in the light from above. The eyes which he opens are "the eyes of our understanding." (Eph. i. 18.) The light which he sheds forth is the steady light of rational and sober conviction. It is not the cold moonshine of formality, which only plays round the head. It is not the false glare of enthusiasm, which only dazzles the imagination. *His* is that piercing beam, which, while it illuminates and convinces the understanding, purifies and converts the heart."

² Rom. v. 10.

³ Ibid. 6.

⁴ John xv. 5.

itself to another stronghold ; and we find them laying claim to their *asking* and *seeking*, as if *that* at least was the effort of their own will, the spontaneous act of their own power. This is just as if one should take a dead person by the hand, breathe life into him, and lift him up upon his feet ; and that person should make a show of acknowledgment to his benefactor, by allowing to that benefactor the praise of lifting him up *after* he was alive, and keeping him alive ever since, and yet should maintain, that the *first breath of all* came into him by his own spontaneous act, by the effort of his own assisted power. The absurdity of such an assertion with regard to temporal life, would strike us at once ; but we are not so struck with it in reference to spiritual life ; and the reason is this : when we speak of a corpse, we know what we speak about ; there it lies before our eyes, incapable of breathing, moving, speaking. We perfectly know what we mean, when we say that a dead *body* cannot raise itself to life. But when we speak of a *soul* "dead in trespasses and sins," we too often use the phrase, merely because we find it in the Scriptures : without the slightest conception of the awful reality expressed by it. Nor is it till we have ourselves in some measure "passed from death unto life," that we begin to perceive the dreadful and close analogy, which really exists between the two states of natural and spiritual death. If God were to come to an unconverted person with the question—not—"Can these dry bones"—but Can these dead souls—"live ?" he would be apt to reply—Why not? What should hinder them from raising themselves up, and breathing the breath of spiritual life? But when God has quickened us from our own death in trespasses and sins, our eyes are open to see what spiritual death really is, and then we learn with trembling awe to reply, "Lord, thou knowest."¹ this is thy work : it is thou that must make us to live, and not we ourselves.'

"Since, then, men are universally disposed to "go about establishing their own righteousness," how carefully ought we to close up every avenue, through which this besetting sin might gain admittance, and rob us of our peace, by leading us to rob Christ of his praise! Many are the windings of our own treacherous hearts ; many are the devices of Satan, by which he would tempt us to ascribe to our own strength, what God hath done for us of his mere mercy. Nor let us think that a mistake here can be of trifling importance. God is very jealous for his great name ; and he has declared, that "if we will not lay it to heart, to give glory to his name, he will send a curse upon us, and will even curse our blessings."² Many and glorious are the crowns which adorn the sacred head of Immanuel. Let us not try to pluck thence the brightest and fairest of them all : for well does it become this King of kings. When we reach heaven, and receive the crown of glory, we shall be ready enough to cast *that* at his feet, and to say, Thou *only* art worthy.

¹ Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

² Mal. ii. 2.

Let us do the same with the crown of grace here; for surely we have as little right to arrogate the one to ourselves as the other.¹

These Scriptural statements of man's total corruption are well connected with *the calls of the Gospel*—not as implying man's natural free-will and power to turn to God; but as displaying the riches of Divine grace, as stamping the mark of guilt upon the moral inability of the sinner, and setting forth the means, by which the Lord accomplishes the purposes of his everlasting love. In the valley of dry bones, to which Miss Graham has just alluded, the prophet was commanded to “call the things that be not, as though they were.” The Almighty power of God gave effect to the feeble voice of his servant.² He fails not to manifest the same almighty power in the resurrection of souls under the ministration of his Gospel; while the sovereignty of his grace is not less apparent in “quicken[ing] whom he will.”³

Perhaps, however, Miss Graham may be considered somewhat defective in *an exhibition of the free invitations of the Gospel*. Many exclusive writers⁴ deem it unnecessary to address the language of pleading love and urgent remonstrance, where the want of inclination opposes a moral barrier to its success. But this is to obscure the riches of the grace of God by the narrow and perverted reasoning of man. Our Lord's personal ministry was in no way restrained by his perfect knowledge of the eternal purpose or of human inability. Though the objects of electing love were individually known to him, yet his gracious offers were as general, as if no counsel had been fixed in the eternal mind, or as if he were unacquainted with its restricted object and end. Though he most decisively declared man's total inability to come to him irrespective of the sovereign application of Almighty power;⁵ yet, “his bands of love” were “the cords of a man”—suited to “draw” him as a rational and responsible creature.⁶ The freeness of Divine mercy—not the secret decree of the Divine will—was the ground and rule of his patient procedure. He spoke the glad tidings to the unbelieving Jews, “*that they might be saved.*”⁷ He complains of them most tenderly, that “*they would not come to him, that they might have life.*”⁸ He connected his declaration of the purpose of God with a full and faithful invitation to sinners.⁹ He offered himself indefinitely to large and mixed assemblies as the provision for the salvation of the whole world.¹⁰ He extended the commission of his Gospel “*to every creature,*”¹¹ and closed the special revelation of the

¹ Freeness of Grace, pp. 53—57.

² Ezek. xxxvii. 2—10.

³ John v. 21, 25, with Ephes. i. 19, 20.

⁴ Miss Graham, however, must not be confounded with writers of this class. If there was an omission in her statements, there was no defect in her system. Her private correspondence abounds with the most fervid appeals to the unconverted, and the most unrestricted offers of the Gospel. See the letters in Chapter v. adduced as illustrative of her ‘compassionate concern for the unconverted.’

⁵ See John vi. 44, 65.

⁶ Hosea xi. 4.

⁷ John v. 34.

⁸ John v. 40. Compare Matt. xxiii. 37.

⁹ Ibid. vi. 37.

¹⁰ Ibid. vi. 50, 51; vii. 37. Compare Isaiah iv. 1, 2. Matt. xi. 28.

¹¹ Mark xvi. 15.

future history of the church, with the same widely-extended embrace of inestimable mercy.¹ Where, then, is the sinner that is excluded from the responsibility of believing the testimony? Or where is he that is shut out from the encouragement of its free and large invitations?

Turning from Miss Graham's writings to her correspondence, we find her views of the Gospel to be equally clear and encouraging.

The following letter gives a distinct view of the ground of our acceptance with God:—

‘February 15, 1828.

‘DEAREST ——. Join with me in admiring the mercy of our God. “For if, *when we were enemies*, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, *much more*, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”² “If we confess our sins, God is”—not *merciful* and *compassionate*,—but “*faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins.”³ For since “Christ once suffered, the just for the unjust”—since *He* “bare our sins in his own body on the tree”⁴—if we believe on him, and lay hold on his salvation, justice itself cannot but acquit us. It cannot be, that Jesus should lay down *His* life, and that then God should require *ours*. It cannot be, that, when Jesus has paid the dreadful debt to the very uttermost farthing, we should be called upon to pay it once again. No. As God is a *faithful* God, He must fulfil the promises He has made, that not one of all those who come to Him through Jesus, shall ever perish. As He is a *just* God, He will not punish us and our Surety too—will not demand a twice-told reckoning. If, indeed, the atonement of Jesus were not perfect; if He had not suffered *all*, not paid *all*, we might tremble. But Almighty Justice declared itself satisfied, when our Surety was released from the prison of the tomb, when he sat down on the right hand of God, and took possession in our name of the inheritance He had purchased for us; and therefore it is said, that He “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”⁵ By his death, He laid down the price of our salvation; by His rising again, He declared that the price was accepted—the salvation complete. And this seems to me the great display of God’s wisdom in the cross of Christ, that the *Just* should be able to justify the *ungodly* without deviating one tittle from His justice—“that He should be just, and (yet) the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”⁶ But we find these two things inseparably united

¹ Rev. xxii. 16, 17.

² Rom. v. 10.

³ 1 John i. 9.

⁴ 1 Peter iii. 18; ii. 24.

⁵ Rom. iv. 25.

⁶ Ibid. iii. 26. We extract an illustration of the subject from her Manuscript, equally beautiful and just. In defining the principle of analysis to be—taking to pieces a train of argument, and examining the soundness of its component parts, she gives the following Scriptural example.—“Christ crucified, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.” (1 Cor. i. 23, 24.) What an overwhelming multitude of reflections crowd upon the serious mind at the bare mention of these words! But in proving the doctrine to unbelievers, how many concurrent circumstances must be separately and distinctly unfolded! It is alleged to be incompatible both with “the wisdom and power of God,” that he should be constrained to glorify one of his attributes at the expense of another. We must there-

in Scripture—holiness and salvation, as I saw it well expressed in some little work I was reading the other day: ‘No salvation *by* works; and yet no salvation *without* works.’ “Christ hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.”¹ If, then, we follow and obey him not as our Prince, He is as yet no Saviour to us. If He has not given us repentance, we must not suppose that He has given us remission. But dear —, let us bear in mind, that both are *gifts*. Repentance is as much a *gift*, and as little a merit as *pardon*. I fear I have been very tedious; but the subject has led me further than I intended. We are sinners seeking a common Saviour; and, therefore, I trust that nothing we can say of him can be wearisome.’

The practical view of this statement is more fully developed in one of her latest letters to the same correspondent:

‘September, 1830.

‘Far from thinking it presumption to write as you have done, my dear friend, I think we ought not to be ashamed of owning what God has done for our souls. We know that it is solely “by the grace of God”—His free, unmerited favor—that we “are what we are;” and that in our lips, and above all, in our lives, we are bound to show, that “the grace of God was not bestowed upon us in vain.”²

‘Dear —, it has indeed pleased God to “call us to His kingdom and glory;” let us (in His strength) “walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith we are called.” “Let us exhort one another daily while it is called to-day; let us provoke one another unto love and to good works;”³ and above all—let us pray for one another—and that fervently and unceasingly. We have need not only to pray, but to “watch unto prayer;”⁴ for it is only as long as we maintain this watchful spirit, that we can hope to enjoy any of the comforts of religion. Let me entreat you—not as one whose freedom from these sins gives her a right to exhort others—but as one who has herself felt by mournful experience what “an evil and bitter thing it is”⁵ to depart from the God of our salvation; as a backslider, whose backslidings have been healed by the inexpressible mercy of a long-suffering God—let me most earnestly and affectionately entreat you to guard eagainst the least declension from holiness—the least relaxation in that close and humble walking

fore consider each attribute apart from the rest, and show how each is glorified in the doctrine of the cross. Each part of the argument must be unfolded. Each link of the wondrous chain must be distinctly separated. We may offer them successively to the unbeliever, and challenge the strictest scrutiny to detect a single break. If only one link be imperfect, the whole chain must give away. All the hopes which hang upon it must perish. But the more closely we examine it, the more complete will be our satisfaction. I have adduced this doctrine in illustration of my meaning, because I know of none which involves a greater number of considerations. In Maclaurin’s Sermon on the Glory of the Cross, we have a most perfect specimen of this kind of analysis.’

¹ Acts v. 31.

² 1 Cor. xv. 10.

³ Eph. iv. 1. Hebrews iii. 13; x. 24.

⁴ 1 Peter iv. 7.

⁵ Jeremiah ii. 19.

with God, which alone can keep you peaceful and happy. Works cannot justify us before God ; but we are said to be justified by works in one part of Scripture¹—that is, they are the only evidence of our justification that we can offer to our fellow-creatures. “ Ye shall know them by their fruits.”² And what are “the fruits of the Spirit ?” Forgive me, if I record them here—the description is so lovely, that we cannot remind one another of it too often—“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”³ Let us examine ourselves by this, dearest —. Let us see whether we bring forth *this* fruit, and whether we “bring forth *much* fruit—*so shall we be His disciples.*”⁴ My course is perhaps almost ended. I have reason to hope that it will not be very long ere I enter into that rest, which Jesus has purchased for me with his blood. Oh, that I had walked more to his glory, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me !” But your course (as a Christian) is but lately begun, and may, if the Lord please, be continued for many years. Oh, then, let it be indeed “the path of the just, which is as the shining light, that shining more and more unto the perfect day.”⁵ “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Be clothed with humility ;”⁶ for as you are of an humbled and “contrite spirit, and tremble at God’s word,” so will “the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,” delight to dwell in your heart, to bless you with his refreshing and sanctifying presence.⁷ And now, dearest —, “may the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God, your whole body, and soul and spirit, be preserved blameless unto the coming of Jesus Christ.”⁸ To Him may we with one heart and voice, give glory both now and for evermore ! Amen.’

The following letter, however, carefully separates the fruit of faith from every ground of dependence. The application of the subject for Christian consolation will be interesting.

‘Stoke, Feb. 21, 1827.

‘The chapter you mention (Matthew xxv.) is particularly delightful, as holding out a lovely picture of the people of Christ. But let us mark, that it is not the action, but the motive, which meets with such high commendation. It is not said—Ye fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, &c., but “I was hungry, and ye gave *me* meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave *me* drink ; inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, *ye did it unto me.*” And this appears to be the grand difference between Christians and worldly people. The Chris-

¹ James ii. 21, 22, 24.

² Matthew vii. 16.

³ Galatians v. 22—24.

⁴ John xv. 8.

⁵ Proverbs iv. 18.

⁷ Isaiah lxvi. 2; lvii. 15.

⁶ 1 Tim. iv. 12. 1 John ii. 15. 1 Peter v. 5.

⁸ 1 Thes. v. 23.

tian does everything *as unto Christ*—in His name, in His strength, and to His glory. The worldling may, and often does, out of natural benevolence or ostentation, feed the hungry, or clothe the naked; but he does it not unto Jesus, but to please himself, to gratify natural feeling, to appear well in the sight of others, to gain a stock of merit enough to buy heaven, or at least to help out what may be wanting in the merit of Christ. These are his best motives: Talk to him of doing good works; *because you are saved*, and not *that you may be saved*; and you are talking of a thing which never entered his narrow heart, and which will not enter it, till it is enlarged by the grace of Christ. But let us beg of God to give us this motive, and right actions will naturally follow. It will, as some one expresses it, ‘like the spring of a watch, soon set all the wheels of our souls a-going.’ I cannot leave this chapter without sharing with you the comfort I have derived from it in another point of view. Does Jesus say—“I was hungry, and ye gave me meat,” &c.? Is He then hungry, when we are hungry? Does He faint, when we are thirsty, and languish when we are “sick and in prison?” And think you, He will not much more sympathize with our spiritual necessities? When we hunger for the bread of life, and thirst for living water; when we are sensible that our guilty souls stand “naked” before him; when we feel ourselves “sick” of that worst disease, sin; and in bondage to Satan, that most hard master—will not He then sympathize with us? And His pity will not be a vain and empty pity. He will not only sympathize, but relieve. He will feed, and nourish, and clothe, and heal and deliver us. Nor will he be content with this. But the same pity He feels for us, He will teach us to feel for others; so that we shall be such characters as He describes the “blessed of the Father” to be. Only let us trust Him for all this, and continually importune him for it; for his promises are all addressed to those who trust, and ask, and seek, and knock.’

The freeness and fulness of the Gospel are delightfully applied, to counteract the subtle influence of self-righteousness.

‘September 28, 1825.

‘You tell me, my beloved friend, that you have lately suffered wordly thoughts to engross too much of your time, and that you have found little comfort in prayer. Will you let me tell you what seems to me to be the cause of this; at least as far as I can judge of my own experience?

‘You need a more simple and entire dependence on what Christ has done for you, and will do in you; you want to be doing something yourself, when He has done all; you would repent and pray earnestly, and then you think Christ would forgive you. I do not know whether I am right with regard to your feelings; but this at least has sometimes been my own case; but in fact, my dear —, it was for sinners, who *cannot* repent, who *cannot* pray, that the Saviour came to die. Repentance is His gift—His *free* gift—as

well as pardon ; and it is only when we are willing to come to Him—poor, empty, and miserable as we are—that He delights in “filling us with good things.” I think I have not clearly explained myself ; but I will try to give you an instance of what I mean.

‘I used to be often doubting whether I was one of Christ’s people or not. Now this one text satisfied all my doubts,—“ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”¹ From this it seems there is but one question—Am I willing to come to Christ ? If so, then am I one of those whom “the Father hath given Him ;” if so, then will He never, never cast me out ; and if so, then is God the Father, then is God the Son, engaged by an immutable promise, by unchangeable faithfulness, to bring me—a feeble worm of the earth—a sinner by nature and practice—yes, even to bring me safe home to glory. Am I willing ? Oh my dear friend, I doubt not your heart is answering to mine : Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I am willing to come unto thee. “To whom should I go?” for there is “none in heaven or in earth, that I desire beside thee !” Again, with regard to the love of the world,—that great enemy to the Christian life,—I used to think, how shall I overcome it ? Now, I look simply to Jesus, who has said—“Be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.”² He has overcome it for us, and will overcome it in us. For how can we love that world, which crucified our Lord and Saviour ? How can we give way to that “love of the world,” which will deprive us of “the love of the Father ?”³ Believe me, my dear —, there is not a sin, however deeply rooted in the heart, from which we may not be delivered by simply looking to Jesus, and pleading with him his precious promises. To this end, “let the word of Christ dwell richly in us with all wisdom ;” let us “hide his word in our hearts,” and we shall find it will preserve us from “sinning against him.”⁴ “The love of the world,” accompanied as it always must be by lukewarmness in heavenly things, is indeed a great sin, and will, as far as we indulge in it, be as a cloud between us and the Father ; for, “know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ?”⁵ But then we need not be discouraged ; for though we never can overcome it in our own strength, we have a promise that the “strength of the Lord Jesus shall be made perfect in our weakness.”⁶ “Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”⁷ Dost thou want grace every moment to keep thee from falling?—“My grace is sufficient for thee.” Wouldst thou have wisdom ? “Christ is made unto us wisdom.” “God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.”⁸ Wouldst thou have peace ? There is “peace and joy for thee in believing.”⁹ Thy Saviour is “the Prince of Peace.”¹⁰ Wouldst thou be preserved unto the end ? “The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and

¹ John vi. 37.

² Ibid. xvi. 33.

³ 1 John ii. 15.

⁴ Col. iii. 16. Psalm cxix. 11.

⁵ James iv. 4.

⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

⁷ John i. 16.

⁸ 1 Cor. i. 30. James i. 5.

⁹ Rxlv. 3.mo.

¹⁰ Isa. ix. 6.

keep you from evil."¹ Finally, do we seek for direction in every step of our path through life? Let us feed on those precious promises in Isaiah xxx. 21. and xlviii. 17. Thus, my dear friend, we may go on "with joy, drawing water out of the wells of salvation;"² and we are then constrained to cry out with Jeremiah—"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."³ I fear that I have already taken too much time upon this; but it has pleased God, in my afflictions, to make Christ, and the word of Christ, so unspeakably precious to me, that my heart will not rest, till I have called on my dear friend to live in consistency with her privileges as a child of God, and to "rejoice in the Lord always."⁴

And again,

'September 17, 1827.

'I have read your letter again and again with deepest interest. I grieved to find, that you do not gain any sensible comfort in the path of religion. You seem to think yourself going backward, rather than forward. But may not this be, because you see daily more of the vanity and wickedness of your own heart, and of the wretchedness of your very best performances? If so, are you not making progress? And while perhaps in reality you are *less* conformed to the world, *less* bent upon earthly things than you were a few months ago; your more enlightened views of the spiritual nature of God's law, and the holy strictness of its requirements, may make you see more worldliness and sin in everything you do, than you were capable of perceiving, when you first began the study of your own heart. For, believe me—the further we "come up from this wilderness, leaning upon our beloved,"⁵ the more clearly we shall see, that not one step can be taken in our own strength; and every time we begin to think we are a little stronger, and may venture to stir a few steps alone, we shall be left to stumble and fall, until he again upholds us with his hand. We want to be something in ourselves, to have something that we can call our own, something to look at, and to rest upon as such: when, alas! we are nothing, have nothing, but what comes to us from the fulness of Jesus. As long as we look into our own hearts for any source of comfort, we must inevitably be disappointed. If we look at "our righteousnesses, they are but as filthy rags;"⁶ "the covering is narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it."⁷ But if we cast these filthy rags from us, and look to the righteousness of Jesus, then we have a spotless robe—an ample covering for our naked and defiled souls. I cannot help thinking, my beloved friend, that your sadness proceeds from thinking too much of yourself, and too little of Jesus. You brood upon your own sin and misery, till you forget "The Lord your righteousness." You are deeply sensible of your

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 3.

² Isaiah xii. 3.

³ Jer. xv. 16.

⁴ Philip. iv. 4.

⁵ Canticles viii. 5.

⁶ Isaiah lxiv. 6.

⁷ Ibid. xxviii. 20.

own weakness, but dwell too little on the sweet assurance, that you "*can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth you.*"¹ You lament your own folly; but is not Jesus made wisdom to you? —your own insufficiency; but "in Jesus dwells" there not "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily?"² and may not you be "complete in him?"³ Yet let us not cease to look at ourselves to make us humble; but let us look at Jesus to make us happy; and when we look at him, let us remember, that he is *our* Jesus, our Saviour, and that he will make us *more* happy. Let me give you a text, which I have sometimes found to be a sovereign remedy against all those fears, which a view of our own sinfulness is apt to excite: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe."⁴ Here is comfort; here is safety. My dear friend, I have as much sin and weakness and folly to lament, as you can possibly have; and if it does not make me as miserable as it does you, it is simply because, whenever I am frightened and tormented by the accusations of conscience, I "run into this strong tower, and am safe." You too are safe, for have you not taken refuge there? Why, then, will you not open your eyes, and behold how the "name of the Lord, as a strong tower," compasses you on every side, so that you are quite out of the reach of every enemy? Jesus is our "hiding-place and our shield."⁵ If we fear Satan, he will soon "bruise Satan under our feet." If we fear the world, Jesus "has overcome the world." If we fear the treachery of our own deceitful hearts, let us put those hearts into the hands of Jesus; he shall turn them "as the river of water, whithersoever he will." Nor is he only thus strong to defend us, but rich to supply our need. If we want repentance, Jesus is exalted to give repentance. If we want faith, "it is given us on the behalf of Christ to believe."⁶ If we want holiness, "Jesus is made of God sanctification unto us."⁷ If we want peace, "the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."⁸ In short—let our sins, our fears, and wants be ever so great, they need not drive us to despair, as long as Jesus lives and "is able to save to the uttermost." *We are complete in him.* Well then might David say, "They that *know thy name* will put their trust in thee;"⁹ well might Solomon say—"Thy name is as ointment poured forth;"¹⁰ and Isaiah—"His name shall be called Wonderful."¹¹ But, my dear friend, *we* have an interest in this precious name; *we* may draw near to the Father of mercies in this name, and *he will deny us nothing.*¹² Then shall we give way to gloomy doubts and forebodings any more? Alas! I know how little all these reflections weigh with us, unless the Spirit of God bring them home with light and power to our hearts. Even while I am talk-

¹ Philippians iv. 13.

² Col. ii. 9, 10.

³ Proverbs viii. 10.

⁴ Psalm cxix. 114.

⁵ Phil. i. 29.

⁶ 1 Cor. i. 3.

⁷ Phil. iv. 7.

⁸ Psalmix. 10.

⁹ Can. i. 3.

¹⁰ Isaiah ix. 6.

¹¹ John xvi. 23, 24.

ing to you, my own heart is so little affected, that I am ashamed to go on ; but I speak rather as I would feel, than as I do feel.'

The above statements of Divine truth will be generally admitted to be of a scriptural and decided character. Her exhibition of the humbling doctrines of the Gospel brings no occasion for despondency ; while it commends to the awakened sinner the simple glory of a free salvation. Nor does her view of gratuitous acceptance lose a particle of its evangelical clearness by the connected display of its fruitfulness. The man thoroughly humbled by the doctrines of the grace of God, will delight in holiness as the track of communion with his God, and the pathway to heaven ; while his sense of continued defilement will preserve him from self-righteousness, deepen his self-abasement, and establish his faith in the simplicity of Christ.

Her connected apprehensions of what are called the higher doctrines of the Gospel with the whole system, are well stated by the beloved brother, whose high privilege it was to attend her during her last illness.

'She had received'—he observes—'the Gospel as a dispensation of pure grace. She delighted to speak in a *holy manner* of God's electing love. She "knew her election,"¹ and rejoiced in a sense of her high privilege. The reception of this blessed doctrine produced in her soul *deep humility, gratitude, and love*. She well knew, that it was God "who had made her to differ"² from a "world that lieth in wickedness," and she could say from her heart,—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."³ She was so deeply convinced from the word of God, from all around her, and from her own heart, of the deep depravity of human nature, of the utter helplessness of man, to do, think, or say anything that is spiritually good, that she saw no other method, whereby a sinful creature could be saved, but from the combined offices of the Holy Trinity—from the election of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the Spirit.'

A single extract from her publication will fully corroborate this testimony. The beauty of her language will justify the length of the quotation.

'Thus it is, that while the doctrine of predestination is death to those who weary themselves in presumptuous disputings and reasonings about it ; there always have been and will be a happy few, who, humbly and sincerely feeding upon it, receiving all that the Scripture tells them concerning it, and desiring to know no further, find it health and peace to their souls. It lays them very low at the feet of their Redeemer ; brings down the high swelling of their pride and self-esteem, pulls away from under them all those broken reeds upon which they had been used to lean, self-righteousness,

¹ Thess. i. 4.

² 1 Cor. iv. 7.

³ Psalm cxv. 1.

self-will, self-dependence ; and leaves to them no one prop on which to lean for support, whilst “ coming up out of this wilderness,” but “ the arm of their Beloved”—that everlasting arm which will surely conduct them to glory. When that arm becomes shortened that it cannot save, or weak that it cannot support ; when the arm of Jesus fails and is weary ; then they will begin to look around for some other stay ; but not till then. Or when they can discover in themselves one single good thing which Jesus did not put there ; one reason why he should visit them with such amazing love ; then they will conclude that his love took its rise from theirs : not theirs from His. But they never will discover one such thing ; so long as the Spirit of God illumines their heart, and brings to light its immense depravity and worthlessness. Therefore as God’s love could not have been excited by anything in them, they believe it to be an eternal love : that they were called in time, because they were chosen from eternity ; and that the name of Jesus is now engraved as a seal upon their hearts, because their names were written on his heart before ever the world was. And when their thoughts stretch forward to the end of this pilgrimage, and they rejoice in the view of the mansions prepared for them in their Father’s house, the crown of that rejoicing is this—“ We got not the land in possession by our own strength, neither did our own arm save us ; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, *because thou hadst a favor unto us.*”¹ “ Thus they rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh ;” for “ God is the glory of their strength ; and in his favor their horn is exalted.”²

‘ I cannot pretend to meet the objections, or to refute the cavils commonly raised, when this doctrine of election is made the subject of discussion ; for I did not learn it in the way of carnal reasonings, but by simply taking the Scriptures as I found them, and as the Spirit of God enabled me to receive them. If St. Paul, after descanting on this subject, breaks off in an ecstasy of admiration, exclaiming—“ How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! ”³—we need not wonder if our shallow understandings are incapable of fathoming, our limited capacities of comprehending, our low minds of reaching them. We must be satisfied with believing that it is even so, because so it seemed good in our Father’s sight,⁴ whatever it may appear in ours. This reason, which appeared satisfactory to our Saviour, may surely satisfy us ; or if not, he has vouchsafed an assurance, which may well serve to repress present inquiry into things too high for us—“ What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”⁵

‘ That these things are so, I believe, because I find them among the “ revealed things which belong to us and our children forever.” How or why they are so, I desire not too closely to inquire, lest I should intrude into the “ secret things, which belong unto the Lord

¹ Psalm xliv. 3.

² Phil. iii. 3. Psalm lxxxix. 17.

³ Rom. xi. 33.

⁴ Matt. xi. 29.

⁵ John xiii. 7.

our God."¹ O that he would give unto every one of us that humble and teachable spirit, with which a little ignorant child is content to receive his father's lessons, without rudely commenting upon his father's ways, or rashly intruding into his father's secrets! This one thing we know; and with this we may be satisfied; that "the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right."² But it were preposterous to expect that he should always do that which is right in our eyes, so long as our notions of right and wrong are so utterly confused and perverted as they have been ever since the fall. He himself tells us that "the Lord seeth not as man seeth:" and that "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."³ It cannot be, so long as "his ways are equal, and ours unequal,"⁴ that his righteous dealings should be in exact accordance with our unrighteous views and sentiments. Instead then of wearying ourselves with impotent attempts to bring down his will and counsel to the level of our ideas, our far wiser way will be to submit our thoughts and ideas to his will, assured that it is holy, just, and good.⁵ She then proceeds to defend the doctrine at some length, and with considerable ability, from the usual objections of charging God with injustice, and of encouraging licentiousness, arrogance, and despondency in man.

The Writer is glad to find that this large extent of quotation, with which he has indulged himself, has in some means been effectual to introduce Miss Graham's work from the comparative obscurity of an anonymous publication, into that more general acceptance, which in his own, and, he presumes he may add, in his reader's judgment, it well deserves. It would be too much to anticipate a universal concurrence in all her statements. Yet from the peculiar unction⁶ and richness of her theology, and its entire freedom from speculation and controversy, they cannot be read by the serious reader without spiritual profit. The more mysterious doctrines (as will be seen from the last quotation) are handled in a holy, practical spirit, eminently calculated to soften prejudice, to prostrate the soul in humble thankfulness, and to enlarge the Christian's joy in God. It is indeed one of the many painful results from the harsh, crude, and abstract statements too often given of these doctrines; that they have contributed unjustly to discredit the more sober Scriptural declarations, which, when cast, like Miss Graham's, into the mould of our Seventeenth Article, are justly pronounced by our Church to be 'full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons.'

On such deep and humbling subjects, the Writer would not presume to set up his judgment as the rule of faith for the Church. Yet he has felt a caution necessary for his own mind, which he ventures therefore to suggest to his brethren. Let us take care lest

¹ Deut. xxix. 29.

² Gen. xviii. 25.

³ 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Luke xvi. 15.

⁴ Ezek. xviii. 25.

⁵ Pp. 45—47.

⁶ The term is used according to Dr. Johnson's beautiful definition—"That which melts to devotion."

the irreconcilableness of these doctrines with our apprehensions of the Divine character, rather than a defect of their Scriptural evidence, should influence our rejection of them. Is there no danger, lest a predisposing bias in the search for this evidence, should obscure that singleness of eye, which is the only medium for the reception of heavenly light?¹ The admission of these doctrines, indeed, as the result of disputation or argument, could only issue in a fearful proportion of that "knowledge which puffeth up," combined with a total absence of the "love that edifieth."² But the child-like reception of them *as revealed in the Holy Scriptures*, will be, (as we have just hinted,) eminently fruitful in humiliation, love, privilege, and devotedness. After all, however, we must remember—"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."³ This sacred aphorism lays the whole substantial basis of the true faith of the Gospel; while the light reflected upon the steady course of Christian consistency,⁴ though it will not clear up every difficulty, will enlarge our discovery of the Divine Goodness to man, and assure to our minds the unchangeableness of God, as the ground of that "strong consolation," which "the heirs of promise" are fully warranted to enjoy.⁵

II. ON SUBJECTS OF THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION.

THE first question is closely connected with some of the subjects of the last Section. It states *her views of the consistency of conditional promises with a free salvation.*

'As to the promises'—Miss Graham observes—'I do not say that they are unconditional either; but I do say, that the conditions on which they depend are such as guilty man is altogether incapable of performing. I do say that Jesus as our *Surety*, has performed all these *for us*, and *by his Spirit* will perform them all *in us*. Through his perfect atonement we escape the threatenings; through his unspotted obedience we become "heirs of the promises"—heirs of eternal life. For if the blame of our sins has been imputed to *Him*, then has the merit of His righteousness been imputed to *us*. "If he has been made sin for us, then have we been made the righteousness of God in him."⁶ And because the promises are ours for his sake, therefore the conditions of them are worked in *us* by his free Spirit; "for it is not we who live the life of faith, but Christ that liveth in us."⁷

"One of the sweetest promises, upon which the mind of every Christian rests with unspeakable delight, runs thus: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."⁸ Here is a *condition*, "Him that cometh;" and a *promise*—"I will not cast out." But who are those that come to Jesus? "All that the Father giveth

¹ Matthew vi. 22, 23.

² 1 Cor. viii. 1.

³ John iii. 27.

⁴ Ibid. vii. 16, 17.

⁵ Heb. vi. 17. 18.

⁶ 2 Cor. v. 21. Romans iv. 6; v. 19. Galatians iii. 29.

⁷ Galatians ii. 20. John xv. 4, 5.

⁸ John vi. 37.

me shall come to me." "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "No man can come to me, except it were given to him of my Father."¹ How distinctly are we here told, that the same free mercy, which promises to receive us *when we come*, must be put forth to *make us come*; or *we never should come!* The promise will surely be fulfilled to all who obey the condition: but none *can* obey the condition, save those *to whom it is given.*"

'Every condition necessary to salvation,' she remarks, 'is fulfilled in us, not by any efforts of our own, but by our "receiving" continually "grace for grace out of the fulness of Jesus." In confirmation of her argument, she adduces the Christian graces (repentance, faith, love,) as *required of us*, but *yet wrought in us.* Thus she concludes this discussion—'The great question, then, about the promises seems to be, not so much whether they are *conditional*, as whether God looks to *Christ*, or to *us*, for the *performance* of those conditions. If to *Christ*, the burden is laid upon "one that is *mighty*:" if to *us*, then we are undone: 'for the condition of man after the fall is such, that he *cannot turn and prepare himself*, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by *Christ preventing us*, that we may have a *good will, and working with us when we have that good will.*"²

The statement is confessedly strong and uncompromising; yet it is, in the writer's apprehension, neither unguarded, unscriptural, or discouraging. It assumes *with our church* the scriptural point *not of the weakness but of the utter helplessness* of man.³ It connects the freeness of the Gospel with the sovereign purpose and Almighty grace of God.⁴ Thus man and God are each in his proper place; man in the dust—God on the throne. The humble and intelligent believer will acknowledge of every act of faith and obedience to the end of his course—"Thou also hast wrought all our works in us."⁵ Nor will he hesitate to trace all these works to the "*good pleasure*" of his God as the first cause.⁶

The opposite statement may be easily proved to be most discouraging. The free invitations of the Gospel are unconnected with an entire dependence upon Divine grace to enable the sinner to accept them. Conscious inability is therefore left without any power to act upon it. The sinner is either blinded in self-delusion, or hardened in despondency. On the other hand, his helplessness is taught to depend upon the sovereign pleasure of a God of love; and he "*works out his salvation with fear and trembling*" indeed, but with confident hope of perseverance.⁷

¹ John. vi. 37, 44, 65.

² Art. X. Freeness of Grace, pp. 28—30, 33—36, 37.

³ See Article X, and the multiplied testimonies from her Collects and other parts of our Evangelical services. Compare John xv. 5. Ephesians ii. 1.

⁴ Compare John vi. 37, with 44, 65.

⁵ Isaiah xxvi. 12.

⁶ Philippians ii. 13.

⁷ Ibid. ii. 12, 13.

The unscriptural use of the term *condition* with many theologians—*as if man could of himself perform the work of his salvation*—has brought it into unmerited disrepute. Yet in Miss Graham's view, conditional promises ultimately resolve themselves into absolute unconditional love. The duties of Christian obedience—the divinely appointed means of enjoying the promises—do not depend upon anything to be fulfilled by us. They constitute a part of the engagements of the evangelical covenant, by which the Lord fulfills the demands of his law, by the Almighty power of his grace.¹ Miss Graham with many excellent men would altogether abolish the use of the term, at least as applied to us. But it has been allowed by many of our most orthodox divines,² whose statements cannot justly be accused of infringing upon the freeness of the Gospel. It would be difficult to substitute any other theological term, that would express the sense of many important declarations³ of Scripture with equal precision and appropriateness. Let it be understood to imply—not what is meritorious, but what is necessary to the economy of the Gospel—not an efficient cause, but an indispensable requisite. Is it not then needless scrupulosity to exchange a convenient term of explication for feeble circumlocution? And may there not be some danger, lest in our anxiety to preserve the freeness of scriptural statement, we unconsciously become fettered in the bonds of human systems?

Her letter upon the nature and degree of explicit faith necessary for acceptance with God is highly interesting.

'The question you propose about prayer, does not appear to me to admit of a doubt. 'Ought there not to be in every prayer a reference to the intercession of Christ? Will the earnestness and sincerity of a prayer avail without it?' Doubtless, my dearest friend, there *ought* to be this reference: nor can a believer in Jesus imagine a prayer without it. But when *an unbeliever* first begins to long after the knowledge of God, the intercession of Christ may be a part of this knowledge, respecting which he is in utter darkness. Shall the earnest and sincere petition which he offers under such circumstances be disregarded? Is not the intercession of Christ going on for him as surely as if he knew of it; and is not this poor ignorant prayer the first-fruits of this intercession? And will not the Father accept it for the sake of his beloved Son, though the sinner as yet knows not how to offer it in his name? Certain I am, that the person who thus begins to seek after the Lord with his whole heart, will ere long have Jesus revealed in his soul; and then he will seek in the name of Jesus. The most signal answer I ever received to prayer, was at a time, when I was so bewildered in the labyrinth of infidelity; that I actually should have feared to have been guilty of blasphemy, had I prayed in the name of Jesus.

¹ Hebrews viii. 10. Thus in Matthew vi. 14, 15, by his law he requires a forgiving temper; by his grace he imparts it.

² Calvin, Owen, &c.

³ Such as Matthew vi. 14, 15. Luke xiii. 3, 5. Col. i. 21—23. Heb. iii. 6, 14.

In sincerity and earnestness I prayed to be taught whether Jesus Christ was an impostor or not ; and for the sake of that precious Saviour, whom I thus insultingly doubted, my prayer was answered.¹

'But our experience is of little value, unless it agrees with Scripture. I think the Bible is very clear upon this head, and therefore I venture to speak so confidently. I will mention two or three texts : "*He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"² Is not this a description of the degree of faith and knowledge, which is necessary before a person can come and pray to God in an acceptable manner ? And is not this the sum of it, that he must believe that there is a God, and that, if he diligently seeks this God, he shall be rewarded by finding the object of his search ? There is not a word about—"He that cometh to God must believe and pray through the intercession of Christ;" though no doubt the person who believes so far as is mentioned in the text, will soon believe God in Christ, as he is revealed in the Gospel. So then, if a Pagan or Mahomedan in the darkest corner of the earth, or an infidel in this country, were to begin to seek God diligently, from the mere "belief that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," upon the warrant of this text I should have no doubt of his acceptance.³ Again, "*If any man will (or wishes to) do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*"⁴ Here is the case supposed of a man, who, so far from praying in the name of Jesus, is not yet convinced whether his doctrines are divine, or whether he is a mere pretender, "*speaking of himself.*" What then is the preparation required ? *He wishes to do the will of God.* He would gladly worship God aright, and submit to his will in all things. Yet he cannot pray *at first* with any reference to the intercession of Jesus. For he would think it sinful to do so, as long as he knows not "whether the doctrine be of God, or whether Jesus Christ spake of himself." Yet this man—we have the word of Jesus for it—"shall know of

¹ See her own interesting description of this state of mind, chap ii.

² Hebrews xi. 6.

³ This text may, doubtless, be accommodated for intelligent and warranted encouragement in the case here presented to us. Yet it may be questioned whether Miss Graham's exposition includes the whole substance of the Apostle's mind. The faith of Cain in bringing his offering probably admitted the naked belief of the existence of God, and of his bounty to those that inquired after him. The Apostle's definition however stands in immediate connection with the faith of Abel and Enoch, (ver. 4, 5,) which implied access to God, and communion with him through an acceptable medium. Indeed the true faith in God's existence seems necessarily to suppose some relation to him. See Gen. xvii. 1. Exod. iii. 14. The very expectation of reward to sinners deserving condemnation, must, in a righteous government, be grounded upon some apprehension, however obscure, of a way of favorable acceptance. The desire and act of seeking also supposes some rule to direct our path and warrant our hope—a rule founded upon some new relation between God and his creatures, by which merited judgment is averted, and "mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

⁴ John vii. 17. Doddridge remarks on Acts x. 34, 35, a somewhat parallel text—"I think this text proves, that God would sooner send an angel to direct pious and upright persons to the knowledge of the Gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it."

the doctrine." Consider also the free and general promise of Christ, that "our heavenly Father will give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him."¹ Suppose yourself to have been in the state of mind of the text just mentioned, and to have heard this gracious promise. Would you have any thought of any intercession—of anything *beyond asking*? And you would probably have asked—"O my heavenly Father, give thy Spirit to teach me whether this man is sent by thee, or whether he speaks of himself?" Suppose for a moment (God forbid that any one should suppose it in reality !) that, after after having offered this prayer sincerely, earnestly, perseveringly, you were at last suffered to perish for lack of knowledge; that the Holy Spirit for which you asked was not given, *because you asked it not*, (and how could you ?) *in the name of Jesus*, the promise would seem to carry with it a want of sincerity, as having a condition attached to it, which was concealed from you, and *which the very nature of your petition incapacitated you from performing*, until further knowledge was given. I believe, that, when Christ said—"Ask, and it shall be given you,"² he meant what he said, in the *literal* sense of the word.

'It is remarkable, that asking in the name of Christ, was a doctrine not revealed to the disciples, till shortly before his death, though they must often have prayed before, and that with acceptance. The Lord's Prayer also contains no *express* reference to this doctrine, though doubtless every Christian *in his heart*, offers it in the one name, through which he looks for acceptance. Let us take the text above mentioned, to an assembly of Indians. Let us say to them—"You know not what to think of our doctrine concerning Jesus. You would take him for your Lord and your God, if you were sure that all we say about him is true. We will tell you how to find this out. There is a promise in the book, out of which we preach to you, that God "will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." The Holy Spirit is given to teach you about Jesus. If you will ask for this teaching, you shall have it; and then you shall know what to think of our doctrine.' They ask. In the name of Jesus they cannot ask. For the very point in question, the very thing which they ask God to teach them is, whether the name of Jesus is of any avail or not. They are impelled to ask by a "belief that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Will the promise be made good to them or not? Or will this failing to pray in a manner in which they do not believe (that is—to act contrary to the reason, which God himself has lighted up within them) annul the engagement, by which God has bound himself, that all that ask should have? Oh! no. This is prayer; and it is praying with precisely that degree of "faith, without which it is impossible to please God." "To every one that hath thus much shall be given, and he shall have abundance"³—he shall be rich in faith. And this is as true to my mind,

¹ Luke xi. 13.

² Ibid. v. 9.

³ Matthew xxv. 29.

as clear as any of the promises of God can be. You say—"Must faith be acting at the time?" I think the *degree* of faith mentioned in Heb. xi. 6, must. Yet even this, we know, may be a trembling faith, such as—"If thou canst do anything—Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief."¹ But "the day of small things,"² the first prayers of a hitherto unbelieving sinner have something in them unspeakably interesting. And it is so delightful to feel, that the very least of the "small things" comes from God, and implies pardon and heaven, and all those great things, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,"³ that we cannot dwell upon them without transport. This is that "faith, which is as a grain of mustard-seed."⁴ Wrapped within its minute, dry, and unsightly husk is the embryo of the future tree, which shall expand and "flourish in the courts of our God." Oh! what a God of wonders! As we cannot look into the hearts of others, it is hard to know when the prayer is earnest and sincere. But if we could discern this, we might look at such a prayer with the same confident assurance that showers of blessings would follow it, as Elijah knew that there would be "abundance of rain," though there was nothing to be seen but a little cloud like a man's hand.⁵

This letter involves a question of much interest and no small difficulty. Miss Graham's sympathy with the case supposed enabled her to fix a conscious grasp upon the subject, and to speak directly to the point with much force and clearness. The instance of the penitent Ninevites,⁶ *ignorant of the medium of acceptance*, might have been added to her Scripture illustrations of the argument. And we can scarcely doubt that the cry to a Supreme Being—"Ens entium, miserere mei!"⁷—"seeking the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him"⁸—may have proved the first dawn of light and love to some awakened consciences in a benighted world.

No other way to God than by Christ⁹ is here supposed, though an *unconscious* approach through him is admitted. For ourselves, however, who have been made acquainted with his precious name, no obligation is more important, no privilege more delightful, than the constant dependence upon it in every step of access to God. It covers all guilt, defilement, ignorance, and infirmities. It assures our confidence in the presence of a God of inflexible justice and unspotted holiness. Our persons and services, in themselves most unsuited to his awful majesty, are presented through this medium, clothed with Divine beauty, and commended in his sight as "a sweet-smelling savor." A clear knowledge of the person of Christ is therefore necessary as the basis of Christian confidence. The exercise of this confidence will be—not to apprehend him *separately*

¹ Mark ix. 23, 24.

² Zech. iv. 10.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

⁴ Matt. xvii. 20.

⁵ 1 Kings xviii. 44.

⁶ Jonah iii.

⁷ "Author of Being, "have pity;" or perhaps—"have mercy on me"—coming in the character of a sinner."

⁸ Acts xvii. 37.

⁹ John xiv. 6.

either as God or man, but to make his *entire person* the object of our trust. This intelligent and spiritual worship is as superior to mere external service, as the blood of the Son of God, by which we are brought into the capacity for it, is to the vile and corruptible things of earth.

The question under consideration, however, requires a wise mixture of decision and forbearance to determine its precise limits. While insisting upon the importance of a clear apprehension of Divine truth, we would present the full Scriptural encouragement to souls emerging out of darkness with a simple desire to know the light; seeking the truth, yet knowing not where to find it. Let them wait in the twilight for the dawning day, humbly, prayerfully, earnestly. Sincerity in the diligent and persevering habit of faith will not be lost in darkness. On the other hand, it must be remembered, that the influence of the Holy Spirit, needful for every act of faith and prayer, stands in ordinary conjunction with revealed truth.¹ Let us beware, therefore, lest by broad statements we lose sight of the great fundamentals of the Gospel, and forget that "there is none other name than Christ under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," and that "life eternal" consists in the knowledge of Him.² Let us also carefully connect the general promises of the early dispensation of the Gospel with the more full and clear light subsequently vouchsafed. The direction to which Miss Graham refers—"Ask, seek, and knock"—must ever be linked with the name of Christ. His name is our only warrant to "ask." Himself is the only way to "seek:" the only door at which we can "knock" with any well-grounded hope of acceptance.³ In the neglect of this theology, we should attempt to open a way to heaven without "entering in by the door." We should admit the unscriptural supposition of pleasing God "without faith."⁴ We should endeavor to maintain our complete acceptance with God without the continual application of "the blood of sprinkling."⁵ 'Take heed'—said the excellent Dr. Owen—"lest, while we endeavor to invent new ways to heaven for others, by so doing we lose the true way ourselves.'⁶

Miss Graham's discussion of the subject, in connection with the experience of the intelligent Christian, is most satisfactory and edifying.

'I think I now quite understand you about prayer. My reason for speaking of the beginnings only of prayer was, that I thought no confirmed Christian could possibly pray without a reference to the mediation of Christ Jesus. But your observation, that we may pray without *immediately referring to it*, or even thinking *directly of it*, is very just, as in the case you mention of ejaculatory prayer. But I would ask you, my dearest friend, is it not an understood

¹ See Gal. iii. 2.

² Acts iv. 12. John xvii. 3. 1 John v. 20.

³ Matt. vii. 7, 8, with John xvi. 23, 24; xiv. 6; x. 9.

⁴ Heb. xi. 6.

⁵ Heb. x. 19 -22; xii. 24.

⁶ Display of Arminianism, chap. xi.

matter between us and our heavenly Father, that we are to have all things in the name of Jesus? Would we, if we could, receive even the least of our blessings through any other medium? Is it not the very joy of our hearts to have everything, and do everything through Christ; to believe that the Father loves us for his sake; accepts us in him; hears our prayers, not because they are ours, but because he offers them for us? And is this fixed, settled, deep-rooted feeling less, when in ejaculatory prayer there is no *immediate* reference to his mediation, than in our larger devotions, when we stop to make out our title more fully, and to dwell upon it more largely? It is delightful and profitable to do this; but yet I think the intention of our hearts is the same in both cases. If you were asked after one of these short prayers—‘How do you expect or wish to be heard?’ would you not reply—‘In the only name of my Beloved?’ And would not the heaven of heavens seem less desirable of attainment, if by any possibility we could possess it in our own name, instead of the security of Jesus having entered before us and for us? I hope I am not wrong, and I am sure I would not object to repeating as often as possible to ourselves and to others our entire reliance upon his name. But I think, that when his mediation has become the very life and food of our souls, we need not torment ourselves with the fear, that such or such a prayer will not be answered, because I did not think of making formal mention of the ground on which I asked. Let me rather say—‘God knows that I would not, if I might, have it answered in any other way. He knows what I mean and constantly desire; and, if through infirmity, I may have expressed myself ainsi or deficiently, infinite love will not misunderstand me.’ If you think I have taken a wrong view, tell me, my dear friend. But I am confirmed in it by this circumstance. When I am in a truly spiritual state, the mediation of Christ is (as it were) so worked up into my being, that I am often (except in stated prayers) not conscious of a direct reference to it at one time more than at another. Yet I think my mind never loses the idea. It is perpetually resting upon this sure anchor of hope. But when I am in a cold and careless state, (as at the present time) I lean upon it with an unstable faith. I am therefore much more often conscious of a *direct* reference to it. The shortest of my prayers have a sort of formality about them, from the cold repeated reference of the name of my Saviour. I do not know whether this is your case. I had rather have the thing so constantly in my heart, that I scarcely stop explicitly to allude to it, than lose the consciousness of it so often (as I now do) that I am obliged to remind myself of it, in order to plead it with God. But I think that in all *sincere* ejaculations there is an inward, though perhaps almost unconscious, feeling of repose and delight in his name, through which alone we desire to have acceptance with the Father. I fear I have not expressed my meaning intelligibly. I have sent, as you desired, my thoughts without reserve; though I know too little of the spirit

and power of prayer to qualify me to give my sentiments on so important a subject.'

The following letter on *Prayer to the Holy Spirit*, evinces much thought and spirituality.

'I feel very incompetent to give you any opinion on the point you mention about the Holy Spirit. Yet I have no doubt whatever in my own mind, that it is both right and desirable to pray to Him separately and distinctly. I should be very much afraid, that the contrary opinion would gradually tend to undermine our faith in the Personality of the Holy Spirit; unless indeed it is meant by this, that we are to pray to the Triune God only, and not either to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, considered as separate persons. I have no doubt, as you say, that when we pray to the Father, we do worship this Trinity in Unity; and perhaps this is the most proper way of addressing our usual petitions. But it appears to me, that separate addresses are *permitted*, if not *sanctioned* in Scripture. And what I would earnestly contend for, (but that I fear I may be meddling "with things too high for me,") is this—If the Father and the Son may be separately addressed; then, not to allow of a separate address to the Spirit, is to rob him in some measure of his equal glory, and to do away with his Personality. I do not at this moment recollect any *direct instances* of prayer to the Holy Ghost in the Bible, though I think that there are many in which he would appear to be the person addressed. But if prayer comprehend adoration and thanksgiving, we often address him separately in the Liturgy, when we say—"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,"—a form of words, in which we imitate the Seraphim before the Throne, who cry—"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory."¹ The same separate act of worship is surely implied when the four beasts, who rest not day and night, adore the Almighty, saying—"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."² Jesus commanded to "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."³ Here again a separate act of worship seems to be implied. By baptizing in the name of each Person of the Holy Trinity, distinctly and separately repeated, I cannot but understand, that we *separately invoke each of them* to perform their covenanted part in the redemption of the baptized person. But I think, that it may at once decide the question, that we are said to be "the temple of the Holy Ghost;"⁴ and why he should come and dwell in this temple, except to receive our acts of worship, I do not see. Besides, all his offices invite us to pray to him. He is our Comforter;⁵ and this warrants us to ask him for comfort. It is his work to "shed abroad the love of God in our hearts;" to cause us to "abound in hope;" and to "take of Christ's and show to us."⁶ But surely "for

¹ Isaiah vi. 3.

² Rev. iv. 8.

³ Matt. xxviii. 19.

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19.

⁵ John xiv. 16.

⁶ Rom. v. 5; xv. 13. John xvi. 14, 15.

all these things he will be inquired of by us, to do them for us."¹ I had almost forgotten to mention that beautiful prayer, Numbers vi. 24—26, which I have always considered as a separate invocation of the Persons of the Sacred Trinity. May "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost" be with us! and may he fulfil his sacred office in teaching us what to pray for, and how to pray!"

This question has exercised the minds of many sincere Christians. Perhaps an endeavor to present it in its full Scriptural light will not be unacceptable. The exclusive claim of the only true God to the worship of his creatures is one of the first principles of right reason and of religion. Upon this eternal and unchangeable ground our Lord denied to Satan the worship which he demanded of him.² We may remark, therefore, *upon the general subject*, that the proofs of the Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit are so decisive, (though obviously this is not the place for their production,) that only scrupulosity of mind and judgment could restrain us from giving the honor of Divine worship from the want of a more explicit revelation. *The Divine nature—not the distinct Personality*—is the proper and necessary ground of worship. Each person therefore in the sacred Trinity possesses equal and unalienable claims—*not as a Person, but as God*—to the trust, love, subjection, invocation, and every form and act of worship from the creatures of God. The Holy Spirit, therefore, 'with the Father and the Son, together is worshipped and glorified.'³

As to the detail of the question, the worship of heaven, as Miss Graham observes, appears to be given to him. At least, he is never mentioned among the universal chorus of worshippers; which (*considering his Personality*) is some negative testimony on this point. He is represented as "proceeding out of the throne," being not only "before," but in the "midst of the throne;" his "seven eyes" marking his omniscience: his sevenfold influence, his divine perfections.⁴ The thrice-repeated invocation of the heavenly host, while it proves his distinct Personality in the undivided Trinity, evidently includes his worship. "The Lord sitting upon his throne," and worshipped with most solemn and impressive adoration, *sent by his own authority, and spoke by his own mouth*, that commission to the Prophet, which an Apostle declares to have been delivered to him *by the Holy Ghost*.⁵

The worship of earth commences at the visible entrance into the Church of God. The very first act of Christian worship in the administration of baptism is not only, as Miss Graham observes, a separate *invocation* of the Holy Spirit, but also a *dedication* of the baptized person to his service.⁶ For as the administration of this

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

² Matt. iv. 9, 10, with Luke iv. 6, 7. Comp. Ps. xlv. 11.

³ Nicene Creed.

⁴ Rev. xxii. 1; iv. 5. v. 6.

⁵ Compare Isaiah vi. 1—3, 8—10, with Acts xxviii. 25.

⁶ Matthew xxviii. 19. The phrase "*baptized unto Moses*," (1 Cor. x. 2.) includes this idea. The people were, as by baptism, consecrated unto God under the conduct and instruction of his servant Moses.

seal of the covenant in the name of the Holy Ghost is a direct acknowledgment of this Divine Person as conjointly with the Father and the Son, our covenant God; so it necessarily implies also the reciprocal obligations of faith, obedience, and worship. "The communion" or "fellowship of the Spirit" (one of the most enlivening privileges of the Gospel) must also, like the "fellowship with the Father and the Son,"¹ be maintained by prayer in the large acceptance of the term. For how else, but in worship, can a creature hold communion with his God? This worship St. John scrupled not to give to the Holy Spirit, in supplicating from him, conjointly with the Father and the Son, a large supply of spiritual blessings upon the Church of God.²

In Christian experience, the offices of the Holy Spirit—as Miss Graham remarks—especially *when connected with his Divine Personality*, naturally imply supplication. In reference to one of these offices, Scripture parallelism, together with the marked distinction of the Sacred Persons, exhibits St. Paul *probably* on more than one occasion invoking the Holy Spirit as the "God that heareth prayer."³ Nor indeed can we conceive of his presence in us as his temple, without all the devotional exercises of reverence and praise for his condescending love.

The part which the Holy Spirit maintains in the administration of the Church, shows that his claim to immediate worship was fully acknowledged. It was *after a day of public and special supplication*, that He directed by His own authority the consecration of ministers to His immediate service, and sent them forth to their work.⁴ To whom, then, we may ask, had the prayers of the Church been specially addressed, but to Himself, who was manifestly the object, as well as the author, of their consecration? And to whom did the worship connected with this solemn service belong, but to Him, who was the direct source and fountain of it? We need again only advert to his acknowledged power in the ordination of the ministers of the Church,⁵ and to the exercise of his sovereignty in the appointment and restraint of their several spheres of labor,⁶ and in the distribution of his gifts,⁷ as a scriptural warrant for the direct and distinct mode of address to Him employed in the Consecration services of our Church.

The Christian investigator of the early Ecclesiastical Records will observe with delight this Divine worship fully pervading the rituals of the Primitive churches.⁸ Our own Church, closely fol-

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Phil. ii. 1, with 1 John i. 3.

² Rev. i. 4, 5. "The seven Spirits," placed in this invocation before Christ, could not be the holy angels; whose name and inheritance are infinitely below him, and whose conscious unworthiness in two recorded instances refused the proffered worship of an apostle. Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9.

³ Compare 2 Thes. iii. 5, with Rom. v. 5. See also the same apparent distinction of persons marked 1 Thes. iii. 12, 13.

⁴ Acts xiii. 2, 4.

⁵ Acts xx. 28.

⁶ Acts xx. 22; xvi. 6, 7.

⁷ 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7—11.

⁸ Hurrian's valuable Sermons on the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and Dr. Berriman's

lowing her sacred exemplar, has not confined this adoration of the Holy Spirit to her more exclusive Ministerial services. How often has the introduction of it into her Litany elevated the faith, and refreshed the spirits of her sincere worshippers! The frequent repetition of the doxology in her Liturgical exercises, is in the true spirit of the heavenly worship; and it may be a matter of just surprise, that any who have constantly and joyfully united in this public ascription of praise to the blessed Spirit, as well as in many of our congregational hymns to a similar purport, should be exercised with scruples as to the Scriptural ground of the private duty and privilege of prayer to the same divine person.

Miss Graham considered, and with some justice, that many Christians are defective in rendering due and equal honor to the Holy Spirit. Her own views of his personality were remarkably clear. ‘I feel’—said she on one occasion—‘*“the love of the Spirit,”*¹ as distinct from the manifestation of *the love of Christ* to my soul. Is this wrong?’ Then she added—‘I think I can account for the feeling; as I have made it a matter of especial prayer, that I might have clearer views of the Holy Spirit.’ She was accustomed (as we have already seen²) to address Him in direct, and probably fre-

and Waterland’s Sermons on the Trinitarian Controversy, give a condensed and satisfactory body of evidence on this subject.

¹ Romans xv. 30.

² See her Prayer before Study, pp. 22, 24. The writer cannot forbear to transcribe a few specimens of the Spirit of supplication in a full, self-abasing, pleading, and enlarged address to this Divine Person from the heart and pen of holy Mr. Baxter. “Unto thee, the Eternal Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, the Communicative Love, who condescendeth to make perfect the elect of God, do I deliver up this dark, imperfect soul, to be further renewed, confirmed, and perfected, according to the Holy Covenant. Refuse not to bless it with thine indwelling and operations; quicken it with thy life; irradiate it with thy light; sanctify it by thy love; actuate it purely, powerfully, and constantly by thy holy motions. And though the way of this thy sacred influence be beyond the reach of human apprehensions, yet let me know the reality and saving power of it by the happy effects. Thou art more to souls than souls to bodies, than light to eyes. Oh leave not my soul as a corpse destitute of thy life; nor its eyes as useless, destitute of thy light; nor leave it a senseless block without thy motion. Alas! I feel, I daily feel that I am dead to all good, and all that is good is dead to me, if thou be not the life of all. Teachings and reproofs, mercies and corrections, yea, the Gospel itself, and all the liveliest books and sermons, are dead to me, because I am dead to them. Yea, God is as no God to me, and Heaven as no heaven, and Christ as no Christ, and the clearest evidences of Scripture verity are as no proofs at all, if thou represent them not with light and power to my soul. O thou that hast begun, and given me those heavenly intimations and desires which flesh and blood could never give me, suffer not my folly to quench these sparks, nor this brutish flesh to prevail against thee, nor the powers of hell to stifle and kill such a heavenly seed. O pardon that folly and wilfulness, which have too often, too obdurately, and too unthankfully striven against thy grace, and depart not from my unkind and sinful soul. I remember with grief and shame, how I wilfully bore down thy motions; punish it not with desertion, and give me not over to myself; Art thou not in covenant with me, as my Sanctifier, and Confirmer, and Comforter? I never undertook to do these things for myself; but I consent that thou shouldest work them on me, as thou art the agent and advocate of Jesus my Lord. O plead his cause effectually in my soul against the suggestions of Satan and my unbelief; and finish his healing, saving work; and let not the flesh and world prevail. Be in me the resident witness of my Lord, the Author of my prayers, the Spirit of adoption, the seal of God, and the earnest of mine inheritance. Let not my nights be so long, nor my days so short, nor sin eclipse those beams, which have often illuminated my soul. Without thee, books are senseless scrawls, studies are dreams, learning is a glow-worm, and wit is but wantonness, impertinence, and

quent supplication. The spiritual life indeed of the Christian is much employed in His reverential service. As "the sin against the Holy Ghost" (whatever that might be) included a wilful rejection of his faith, honor, and worship; so does every sin of "grieving" our Divine Comforter, and "resisting" his holy influence, partake, according to its measure, of the same character.¹ The antecedent obligation is therefore sufficiently obvious. The being against whom sin is committed, must be the worthy object of religious honor and service. All the exercises therefore of contrition and self-abasement on account of sin, are our humiliating but ready acknowledgments of the claim of the Holy Spirit to our dutiful obedience and worship. Perhaps the circumstance of our worship being the effect of his own sacred influence and teaching, may account for some want of distinctness in setting forth the obligation. But his Divine Person and offices necessarily imply our equal dependence upon his power and love: and the full and frequent confession of his claim will result in a large supply of his heavenly grace, strength, and consolation.

Should some of the minor particles of illustration be thought to possess little or no positive weight, they may yet derive force and clearness from their connection with more decisive grounds of evidence. From the main points, however, and from the whole view of the question, sufficient warrant may be deduced to satisfy perplexed and unsettled inquirers, and to quicken even the most intelligent servant of God to a more habitual acknowledgment of his duty, and enjoyment of his privilege in communion with the Holy Ghost. If a more explicit testimony still be demanded, we must recur to first principles, never more valuable than on these subjects. "*It is written.*" What is written is sufficient. What is withheld is best withheld. Man would be "wise above what is written." Had more been revealed, more would still have been desired; and the appetite for what is beyond human research would have been more excited, and not only without practical benefit, but to the great detriment of Scriptural knowledge. Enough is given both in substance and clearness to direct and encourage our supplications to the Divine Spirit for a full supply of his heavenly influence. But in this and every other approach to the doctrine of the Trinity, many questions must arise, and must remain unanswered. All that belongs

folly. Transcribe those secret precepts on my heart, which by thy dictates and inspirations are recorded in thy holy word. I refuse not thy help for tears and groans; but oh! "shed abroad that love upon my heart," which may keep it in a continual life of love. And teach me the work which I must do in heaven. Refresh my soul with the delights of holiness, and the joys which arise from the believing hopes of the everlasting joys. Exercise my heart and tongue in the holy praises of my Lord. Strengthen me in sufferings; and conquer the terrors of death and hell. Make me the more heavenly, by how much faster am I hastening to heaven; and let my last thoughts, words, and works on earth be likest to those, which shall be my first in the state of glorious immortality, where the kingdom is delivered up to the Father, and God will forever be All, and in All: of whom, and through him, and to whom are all things. To whom be glory forever. Amen.—
Reasons for Christian Religion, Part ii. chap. xii. pp. 461—463.

¹ Comp. Matt. xii. 32. Eph. iv. 30. Acts vii. 51; v. 4.

to the inner sanctuary of the essence of the ever-blessed Triune God, is equally above conception and expression. The Scriptures inform us of his nature, but they do not reason about it. A divinely guarded and sacred veil covers him from our view. And much thought upon this deep subject of Deity—*irrespective of, and beyond, the sacred boundaries*—either involves us in the labyrinth of metaphysics, or sinks us into the gross, low, and familiar views of an opposite school. Our inquiries into this subject must be conducted with the deepest caution and the most profound humility. All that belongs to God's own revelation of himself must be received with unfeigned submission and contentment. To seek for “access through Christ by the Spirit unto the Father,”¹ is the rubric for Christian worship; and in a strict attention to this Scriptural directory, every act, thought, and desire of prayer will become a means of communion with each of the Sacred Persons in the Divine essence, “without difference or inequality.” At the same time, as our minds are drawn to a separate contemplation of them (especially as seeking those blessings which belong to their respective offices in the economy of grace) an immediate address to either of them is fully warranted; always however remembering, that, whichever person be the object of worship, the mediation of Christ is the only way of access, the only plea for acceptance.

Adverting now to topics of more general interest, we transcribe from Miss Graham's Manuscript a few remarks *upon the subject of Infidelity*, as a fearful characteristic of the present day. They will be found to possess the usual marks of her sound, reflecting, Christian mind. Speaking of the importance of mathematical study as furnishing armor and discipline suitable to the present crisis,² she remarks—

‘Intelligent Christians are especially called upon to set themselves in strong array against the gathering forces of infidelity. This last enemy of Christianity is filling up his ranks from all classes of the community. The active diligence of his malignity naturally reminds us of the prediction—“The devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”³

The deceitful and superficial character of the arguments employed by the great adversary is well exposed. ‘They generally consist,’ she observes, ‘of a confused mass of objections, apparently formidable from their very indistinctness. Like objects seen through a fog, the superficial observer supposes them to be larger than they really are. But let us disentangle the artful confusion of words and ideas. Let us set apart each argument for separate and minute scrutiny. Let us analyze the boasted reasonings of the infidel philosophy. We shall find that they may be classed under two heads

¹ Ephesians ii. 18.

² Yet, while insisting upon these advantages, she was not insensible to the ensnaring temptations connected with this investigating science. See the analysis of her Manuscript, p. 24, 25, note.

³ Rev. xii. 12.

—Assertions which are true, but no way to the purpose: and assertions which are to the purpose, but they are not true. These form the materials of every plausible argument against Christianity. By this mixture of untrue and irrelevant matter with that which is true and pertinent, the understandings of the self-conceited and unwary are subverted. Strictly speaking, no assertion can be to the purpose which is not true. But it may be of such apparently pertinent application, as to lead us to examine less closely into its truth. On the other hand, if it be undeniably true, we sometimes forget to inquire (especially when many arguments of this kind are artfully interwoven together) whether it has any connection with the subject in hand.'

In reference to the efforts necessary to resist this mighty spirit, she justly inculcates the importance of a well-furnished and well-disciplined mind, enabling us to meet the infidel upon his own ground of reason, and to fight him with his own sword.

' Whenever, she observes, "the enemy thus comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."¹ He, who in his purpose of inscrutable wisdom suffers these "scoffers to come in the last age,"² will not fail to raise up men in his church well fitted to resist them. These champions of the cross must be men "strong in the faith," and "filled with the Holy Ghost." But, judging from the instruments which the Lord has employed in times past for his church, we are led to expect that they will be learned in all the wisdom of their enemies—in earthly as well as heavenly wisdom. To oppose the subtleties of Arius, an acute and powerful reasoner was raised up in the person of Athanasius. A wise and learned Augustine was provided to quell the dreadful heresy of Pelagius. Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and almost all the eminent Reformers, were men of profound erudition, and strong powers of argumentation. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise,"³ and he could now, and perhaps may, see fit to correct the progress of infidelity by means of "unlearned men."⁴ Yet, when we look back upon the instruments which he has heretofore raised up, and consider the many advantages of human learning which he has placed within our reach, it seems evidently our duty to use those means to the utmost; at least, until the Lord shall give us some clear indication of a more excellent and acceptable way. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings our God ordaineth strength."⁵ Let us then seek to obtain the spirit and temper of a little child. But let us never forget, that, while "in malice we are children," it behooves us "in understanding to be men."⁶

She thus happily brings a scriptural illustration to bear upon her subject.

' David with a sling and a stone fought Goliath and conquered.

¹ Isaiah lix. 19.

⁴ Acts iv. 13.

² Peter iii. 2

⁵ Psalm viii. 2.

³ 1 Cor. i. 27.

⁶ 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

This time he wanted no other weapon, for God had appointed him no other. But when on a future occasion he was sore pressed by his enemies, he went into the temple of the Lord, and demanded the sword of that same Goliath. "There is none," said he, "like that; give it me."¹ Why should he choose a weapon, which he had seen fall powerless from the hand of the uncircumcised Philistine? Because he knew that in the grasp of the circumcised David it would do goodly service. The hand, not the weapon, had been in fault. Thus may we, if called by the leadings of Providence, avail ourselves of human means, and meet our adversaries hand to hand with their own weapons. Only let us use David's caution. Let us not take the sword of the Philistine, till it has been consecrated in the temple of the Lord.'

The present face of the times, in the judgment of all intelligent observers, seems strongly to mark an impending crisis—as if the "Israel" of God "and the Philistines were putting the battle in array, army against army."² We know on which side the victory is secured. Yet the conflict will doubtless be severe. Let the servants of God gird themselves for "the good fight of faith," with the whole armor of God. This is no time for slumber or inaction. A religion taken upon trust, "received by tradition from our fathers," provides no resource in the hour of trial. A "faith, standing not upon the wisdom of man, but upon the power of God,"³ will be a defence, a stay, a ground of unfailing hope and consolation.

But on this subject we will give Miss Graham's own words in a letter to her cousin. It will be found to be a refreshing specimen of her practical and edifying mode of treating subjects, which have lately been found so fruitful in speculation.

"April, 1827.

"Amongst the many reflections which I have made upon the Millennium, there are two which occupy my mind very much. I thought of them the whole of one day; one was founded upon this text—"And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end, because it is yet a time appointed."⁴ Does not one shudder with horror in anticipating the fulfilment of this prophecy? Who can need purifying more than we do? Who can say that these words are not addressed to us? How dreadful to fall in that time when the Saviour is about to appear! to fall in the very moment when our song of triumph should begin! to fall in the very midst of enemies, of persecutions, of infidelities, in that time when "the devil will have great wrath, because he knoweth that he will have but a short time" to trouble the faithful.⁵ But I think that perhaps God has inspired me with this fear, that I may pray against so

¹ 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

⁴ Daniel xi. 35.

² Ibid. xvii. 21.

⁵ Rev. xii. 12.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 5.

fatal an event ; and this is my reason for communicating it to you. When I was almost overwhelmed with this reflection, these sweet words came to my heart, and made me think of you,—“ Two are better than one.”¹ Since in this instance the Scriptures and our hearts agree, I beseech you not to separate yourself from me. Let us love each other always, and pray for each other, that we may not fall. But if unhappily one of us should fall, may the other be ready to raise her up again. If I should fall either into the love of the world, or into infidelity, or into any other sin, do not give me up. Do not think I am a hypocrite. Think that it is to “ purify and to try me ;” and pray, that if you fall, I may act in the same way towards you. But in the midst of the thoughts which these sad ideas gave me, these words came for my encouragement,—“ They that are with the Lamb are called, and chosen, and faithful.”² You know how precious these words have been to me. But I now saw them in a new point of view. They appeared to me a plain promise introduced exactly at that time to console the saints under their difficulties, by assuring them that they will be a little troop, “ called, chosen, and faithful,” against whom no enemies will be able to prevail : that they will have a degree of faith proportioned to their sufferings and necessities. In short, in describing the character of this elect band, I wish to believe, that it describes what we shall be found, if we arrive at that period. If already we are “ called and chosen,” shall we not then be “ faithful ?” Let us plead this promise. It speaks to me like a voice from heaven. It answers every fear, every uncertainty. Would God choose and call soldiers who would be unfaithful to him ? Will not our captain teach us to go follow him wherever he will have us go ? When I say to myself, ‘ Poor and feeble creature, what will you do in that time of distress and temptation ?—faith, which cannot resist a single vain thought, how will you resist the united efforts of the world, the devil, and a wicked heart ?’ Then I answer, ‘ Yes ; but has not God said, that the saints in that day shall be “ faithful and chosen” by Himself, who cannot choose amiss ? Rest upon his word ; if he sees that you are not fit to fight in the battle of that great day, He will not call you to it ; and if he call you to it, it is his part to give you the fidelity which will be so necessary.’

Miss Graham’s remarks *on the subject of Prophecy* will be interesting, and furnish occasion for some observations suited to the present time. Having insisted upon the importance of mathematical study in reference to the progress of infidelity, she applies the same train of reasoning to the *excitement to the study of Prophecy*, which she justly remarks to be one of the prominent characteristics of our day.

‘ There is yet another subject,’ she observes, ‘ which, though at present but partially considered, bids fair, ere long, to engross the attention of the Christian world, I allude to the study of prophecy.

¹ Eccles. iv. 9, 10.

² Rev. xvii. 14.

"Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read"—is the Divine command; "no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate."¹ I am particularly led to advert to it in this place, because I have heard with inexpressible pleasure, that these inquiries have already been useful in thinning the ranks of infidelity. The inducements to this study are indeed greater than in any former age of the church. The coincidence between prophecy and its fulfilment is in these latter days grandly conspicuous. It is such, that "he who runs may read."² The winding up of the whole seems to be near at hand. The last prophecy must ere long, find "her mate,"³ in the last event of humanity. Prediction is almost swallowed up in accomplishment.⁴ Happy are those, who with reason enlightened by a ray of divine intelligence, can trace the wonderful coincidence, which subsists between what God has foretold, and what he has done; whose thoughts stretch forward in awful, yet fearless anticipation of what God is about to do!

"But to attempt any discussion of the views that are held upon this subject, would be foreign to the purpose of this little treatise. If we would enter fully into the prophetic writings, we must, like Daniel "set our faces unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication."⁵ My object is to hint to the youthful student, who may probably be hereafter engaged in this most interesting contemplation, the extreme importance of having his imagination under the strictest discipline of reason. If ever the "spirit of a sound mind" was necessary, it is so in the investigation of the future prophecies. A more than mathematical accuracy of definition, of statement, and of argument, should be carried into all that is said or written upon this subject. When I consider the extraordinary spirit of inquiry that is now beginning to spread; when I think I perceive that these inquiries are not only justified by Scripture, but are themselves a part of prophetic fulfilment; and when I joyfully antici-

¹ Isaiah xxxiv. 16.

² Hab. ii. 2.

³ If this idea was intended to be the exposition—not the accommodation—of the text, it will generally be considered fanciful. A general rule is probably given to stimulate to the investigation of prophecy. But the context will readily supply the particular application of the case alluded to. Miss Graham's thought, however, is expressed by our great Christian philosopher, Lord Bacon, with his accustomed depth and clearness. Expressing his wish that 'a History of Prophecy' might be given to the church, he adds his own view of what it should be. 'The history of prophecy,' he observes, 'consists of two relatives, the prophecy and the accomplishment. Hence the nature of the work requires, that throughout all ages of the world, every Scripture prophecy should be compared with the event, for the confirmation of the faith, and the wise instruction of the church, with regard to the interpretation of the prophecies, which yet remain unfulfilled. The latitude, however, must be allowed, which is agreeable to the Divine prophecies (of course Lord Bacon only refers to the several successive and connected parts of one prophetic system) not fulfilled at stated times, but in succession, according to the nature of their Author, to whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." They are not therefore fulfilled punctually at once; but they have a growing accomplishment through many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to a single age or moment.' Of the work itself, however, he wisely adds—*Let it be treated with wisdom, sobriety, and reverence—or let alone.—Advancement of Learning, book ii. c. 2.*

⁴ Perhaps this expression will be considered to mark the glowing ardency of her feelings, rather than the discipline of her judgment.

⁵ Dan. ix. 3.

pate, that "many shall run to and fro" on this subject, "and knowledge shall be" wonderfully "increased;"¹ it is at such times that I most deeply feel the importance of entreating the young Christian diligently to cultivate, in a spirit of prayer and faith, all those parts of education, which especially tend to impart soundness, penetrativeness and energy to his reasoning powers.

Whatever may be thought of the somewhat novel connection of prophecy with mathematical study, it would have been well for some of our modern interpreters to have disciplined their minds to the principles of this more severe science. Much crude and dogmatical statement would have been restrained, many painful absurdities would have been excluded, and much perplexities spared to the path of the sincere, but unfurnished inquirer. The prophetic study is indeed, as Miss Graham observes, one of the characteristics of our day. The church is at least partially awakened to a full and dutiful acknowledgment of her Lord's command, "*Search the Scriptures.*"² Indeed, apart from the authority of this express command, the universal "spirit of prophecy," as "the testimony of Jesus,"³ while it furnishes the true key of interpretation, gives it an imperative claim upon our attention and regard. The personal benefits of this study are such as richly to repay all the serious attention and humble prayers that may be devoted to it. A minute consideration of some of the most interesting parts of the sacred book, can scarcely fail of enriching the temperate and holy student with most valuable results. Added to which, the succession of events most deeply interesting and solemnly instructive, passing before us through the medium of the daily press, strongly marks our immediate and individual concern in this scriptural research.

Many Christians are unduly repelled by the difficulties and uncertainty, which confessedly belong to the subject. But "the prophets," though they could not understand, felt it their duty and privilege to "search."⁴ "We have also the more sure word of prophecy," with the injunction that "we do well that we take heed to it,"⁵ and with a special and most encouraging promise to stimulate our investigation.⁶

The precise extent of the claim of this study must however be variously estimated. In all cases indeed, the consideration of *fulfilled prophecy* is a component of Christian evidence to our own minds, and will furnish the "answer, that we should be ready always to give to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear."⁷ *The study of unfulfilled prophecy—if it be a general duty—is not in all cases the immediate duty.* It must be subordinated to the primary concern of a personal interest in the Gospel. To a mind awakened to serious inquiry on its own state, yet but slightly tinctured with conviction, and imperfectly directed to the Saviour, the presentment of the claims of

¹ Daniel xii. 4.

² John v. 39.

³ Rev. xix. 10.

⁴ 1 Peter i. 11, 12.

⁵ 2 Peter i. 19.

⁶ Rev. i. 3.

⁷ 1 Peter iii. 15.

unfulfilled prophecy for consideration is a most mischievous evil. The soul is diverted from the main object of contemplation and pursuit. Imagination is exercised instead of faith. A speculative taste is gratified in the place of the practical influence of the truths of the Gospel. This "ignorance of Satan's devices" enables him to get advantage—if not to the ruin of the soul—yet to the "corruption of the mind from the simplicity that is in Christ."¹ And indeed under all circumstances, attention to prophecy must be regulated, in some degree at least, by the leisure, opportunities, and advantages severally belonging to us; not failing to pay due regard to Scriptural proportion, as well as to imperative obligation. That exclusive study, which occupies the place of Christ crucified in doctrine, and forms a substitute for the various exercises of experimental and practical habits—is greatly to be deprecated. Besides the evils with the young inquirer just adverted to, it keeps out of sight many important subjects of obligation and interest included in the sacred canon. It has ministered to mere speculative curiosity and unhallowed presumption. It has originated many of the schisms now unhappily dividing the church, by the substitution of "doubtful disputation" for substantial truth, greatly to the hindrance of Christian privilege, devotedness, and consistency.

Admitting, however, the general importance of this study, the temper in which it is to be conducted is a matter of the first moment. The instance of Daniel produced by Miss Graham, exhibits the finest specimen of the Prophetic Interpreter or Student. Such diligence of research, in prostration of soul, accompanied with such sanctity, humility, faith, and perseverance, will, under the most unfavorable circumstances of external destitution, be honored of God. The exercise of these holy graces will form a safeguard against the delusive influence of human speculations, and will enable us to improve the results of divine teaching for the high purposes for which they were vouchsafed. The investigation of prophecy will thus become a cheering support to us in the anticipation of trials, and a quickening stimulus to the discharge of our immediate responsibilities.

The warranted expectation, however, of human help may probably have been overrated. Though in this, more than in any other age, "many have run to and fro"—yet it may be doubted how far Miss Graham's hopes have been realized by an increase of "knowledge"² commensurate with the extent of research. The march of Christian intellect has been in most cases retarded by a defect of spiritual or intellectual qualifications. Some of the more elaborate and practised writers want that unction and spirituality, which evidence a mind divinely-instructed for this "search into the deep things of God;" and this deficiency of the stamp of heavenly influence materially weakens our confidence in the results from their subsidiary intellectual advantages. Other writers of a more

¹ 2 Corinthians ii. 11; xi. 3.

² Daniel xii. 4.

decidedly evangelical school, are too sparingly furnished with those resources of erudition and intelligence, which doubtless were intended to reflect valuable, though subordinate, light upon the prophetic page. Some, again, of the same school, have taken up crude and undigested views—the result of imagination, impulse, or excitement, rather than of matured judgment and consideration; while the dogmatism and self-sufficiency of others give no proof of divine suggestion, and offer no satisfaction to the inquiring mind. There is probably no accredited writer in the various prophetic schools who has not contributed his quantum in clearing up difficulties, and throwing light upon some department of the subject. Yet it may be doubted whether a connected and comprehensive scheme of the divine system has yet been satisfactorily developed: and in the different schemes that have been proposed, much Christian discernment is required to separate in them what is solidly established, from what is unsubstantial and speculative. Human helps must therefore, under all circumstances, be subsidiary—not primary. God's book must ever maintain its own supreme place. The scattered rays reflected from different parts of its prophetic system (such as the comparison of the Books of Daniel and John) and centering in one point, will often furnish a strong and clear light for the direction and encouragement of the Christian student. We feel therefore great confidence in recommending a Berean search of the Scripture as the ground-work of prophetic investigation;¹ not omitting to avail ourselves of the industry and intelligence of accredited writers for the expansion of our views and the elucidation of our difficulties; but at the same time exercising our judgment, in dependence upon our heavenly Teacher, again to compare the exposition of their systems with the light of the sacred book. In this process of inquiry, we are persuaded, that "the wise shall understand," (even though they be "wayfaring fools,"²) as far as is consistent with the divine will, and necessary for their duty and comfort; and for the rest they may well be content to wait for the full splendor of the light of the heavenly world.

May the writer without presumption be allowed to suggest a few hints relative to the clear interpretation and profitable study of prophecy?

1. *Let the special need of Divine influence be primarily considered.* Far be it from the writer to underrate the intellectual qualifications. He is well aware of the treasures of erudition, that have been effectively applied to this most important subject. He would have the whole field of prophecy traversed with all the mind and research that can be brought to bear upon it. But he cannot forget that the teaching wisdom belongs to God; and that it is the irradiation of his holy light, which can alone illumine the dark places in this to us uncertain track.³ Let the interpreter duly

¹ Compare Acts xvii. 11, 12.

² Daniel xii. 10, with Isaiah xxxv. 8.

³ It is worthy of remark, that Daniel's knowledge of unfulfilled prophecy is distinctly connected with the Spirit of prayer. Daniel ii. 16—23; ix. 20—27.

weigh his special and weighty responsibilities. How large a portion of the grace and "wisdom that is from above" does he need, to induce that waiting spirit so acceptable to God; to restrain the rising of dogmatism, spiritual self-will and conceit; to repress "private interpretations," so inconsistent with the comprehensiveness of Scripture prophecy: to guard against giving his own mind in the professed desire only to interpret the mind of God; to take an entire view of the whole range of prophecy, instead of contracting his interest to a few favorite points; to forbear with the decided views of his opponents; readily to retract his indigested opinions, and to yield his prejudices to the influence of more correct and enlarged apprehensions; and habitually to connect every view with the glory of his Saviour, and the extension of his kingdom! These are confessedly responsibilities of no ordinary moment. They forbid trifling with the subject, as if its clear light were revealed by some momentary inspiration; they realize the urgent need of "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" to "enlighten the eyes of his understanding;"¹ and they inculcate a habit of dependence, supplication, seriousness, and that reverence which Lord Bacon so justly describes as indispensable to the profitable consideration of the subject. In the defect of this spirit, successive systems of prophecy have been ingeniously woven; the interpreters "come together," and bring before the church their several hypotheses and conclusions; and "every one," as at Corinth, "hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation."² It cannot be doubted, but this defect of Christian simplicity is one main cause of the indeterminate apprehension of the subject. Who does not see how needful is "singleness of eye," the gift of God, to reflect light upon the mind; while an "evil eye," affected with some natural bias, leads us in the review of the results of human ingenuity to exclaim, "How great is this darkness!"³

2. *Let a forbearing spirit be inculcated in this research.* The importance of this spirit in an intellectual view is sufficiently obvious, as a guard from the prevalent evils of self-conceit. Its influence in every department of sacred truth—especially in the field of prophecy—is of yet higher moment. The writer's own studies in this field have brought him to the fixed conclusion—that many of the controverted points (those, for example, connected with our Lord's second Advent,) are embarrassed with difficulties on both sides, sufficient to preserve wise and humble men from dogmatizing on either part: and to excite mutual respect and forbearance, rather than what we are too often constrained to see—"brethren grudging one against another."⁴ The event indeed is a doctrine of faith—

¹ Eph. i. 17, 18.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

³ Matt. vi. 22, 23. It is a remarkable expression—"None of the wicked (using the term in the large scriptural sense) shall understand," Daniel xii. 10. The outward sources of information are open to them. But their pride wilfully excludes them from the direct inlets of Divine light. See Matthew xi. 25, 26. 1 Corinthians ii. 14; iii. 18—20.

⁴ James v. 9. Comp. Matt. xxiv. 48, 49.

absolutely certain. The time and circumstantial being imperfectly revealed, are matters of forbearance ; on which all, even the most sober, interpreters have been constrained in the course of investigation, in some points of more or less moment, to retract, modify, or restate their views. Indeed, prophecy, according to the Scriptural definition, is "a light that shineth in a dark place,"¹ yet not surely the light of "perfect day;" and well would it be for us, if the confession of our ignorance would find vent in the Apostle's adoring contemplation—"How unsearchable are his judgments ! and his ways past finding out!"² We may indeed justly expect clearer light to dawn upon us, as the consummation of the grand events draws on. Meanwhile we must combine diligent study with cautious application. We must be content for the most part with the statement of general views and results. If the events are clear, the time, mode, and means of their accomplishment are often undefined. We are assured, that none of the Divine predictions can fall to the ground ; that the events contemplated in them are the fruit of the Lord's superintending love to his church, and that they will all issue in the final advancement of his own glory. In this recollection it is most suitable to cultivate that truly Christian spirit of patient expectancy, which, in child-like humility, not in slumbering indolence, is content to leave to the Lord the unfolding of his own purposes.

The Writer may be permitted to observe that the indeterminate fixing of dates to the several prophetic eras, offers large room for the exercise of this forbearing spirit. Prophets, with all their warranted confidence, were modest. They never spoke without a clear commission—" *Thus saith the Lord.*" Interpreters of prophecy are not always so modest. The confident mode of calculation which is sometimes adopted, might lead us to suppose, not only that the several periods, but also that their commencing points, were, like Daniel's weeks,³ absolutely revealed. To a few of the most important eras, indeed, dates, more or less probable, *but not absolutely decisive*, may be assigned ; but in periods of less moment, experience has fully shown how unsatisfactory all attempts to fix the precise periods of events have proved and are likely to prove. Our Lord, while he reproved listless indifference to "the signs of the times,"⁴ rebuked with no less decision this presumptuous interference with his sovereign prerogative.⁵ 'If ever,'—as Miss Graham admirably observes—"the spirit of a sound mind" is necessary, it is so in the investigation of the future prophecies.' Wise and holy men of God will learn to speak with caution and reserve upon subjects obscurely revealed. General views are sufficient for the ground and encouragement of faith. And the cloud that still covers this mystic history of futurity, abundantly shows, that the end of prophecy was not to make us prophets—but to "set us upon our watch-

¹ 2 Peter, i. 19.

⁴ Matt. xvi. 3.

² Rom. xi. 33.

⁵ Acts i. 7.

³ Daniel ix. 24—27.

towers,"¹ as diligent and huncible inquirers, seeking to "have understanding of the signs of the times, that we might know what Israel ought to do,"² and to expect.

Indeed, this designed darkness subserves various and important uses. It furnishes a needful and wholesome check upon human speculation. Had the Great Author of prophecy intended it as the rule of life, he would doubtless have written it with a sunbeam. In its present mode and character of revelation it is however admirably suited—not indeed to indulge unwarrantable curiosity, but to exercise our faith, to call forth our Christian graces, to enliven our hopes, to quicken our anticipation of the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of Christ; and meanwhile, that we should mark with soberness the gradual development of progress towards this glorious consummation. It is far more profitable—instead of making a framework for ourselves—to be looking in the Lord's best time for that clear reflection of light in the fulfilment of prophecy, which will awe even the most inconsiderate to conviction.—"This is the finger of God. What hath God wrought!"³

3. *Let the subject be ever considered as a practical study.* It is a sign of an unhealthy, excited temperament, if the prophetic parts of Scripture be more interesting than the preceptive—that is—if we are more conversant with matters of uncertain interpretation, than with the subjects that relate to our immediate duty. If the prophetic study be dissociated from its practical character and consequences, our prepossessed fancy is far more likely to give the interpretation than the Divine Spirit. The blessing belongs to those that "*keep the things* that are written in the words of this prophecy."⁴ The fruit of Daniel's research was that which is most specially needed at the present eventful moment—intercession for the Church and for the land.⁵ Habakkuk went to his watch-tower—not to speculate in idle curiosity, but as we have before hinted, to be in readiness to hear the valuable lessons of reproof and instruction that were designed for him.⁶ Supposing that the period of accomplishment is far distant, yet there is a large preparatory work of prayer, exertion, and Christian devotedness, urgently pressing

¹ Hab. ii. 1.

² 1 Chron. xii. 32. One of the most profound and sober expositors of prophecy well deserves to be heard on this point. 'The folly of interpreters,' observes Sir Isaac Newton, 'has been to foretell times and things by the prophecy of the Revelation, as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of God, when he gave them this, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, was, not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to foreknow things; but to the end that, after, they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event; and his own providence, not the wisdom and skill of the interpreters, be thus manifested thereby to the world.' Bishop Hurd also well remarks to the same point, that 'the declared end of prophecy is, not that we may be enabled by it to foresee things before they come to pass; but that when they come to pass, we may acknowledge the divine Author of the prophecy.' (Serm. VIII.) 'Even the prophecies of Christ,' as the same author observes, (Serm. V.) 'could not give full conviction till the time of their accomplishment had arrived.'

³ Exodus viii. 19. Numbers xxiii. 23.

⁵ Daniel ix. 2, 3, 16—19.

⁴ Rev. i. 3.

⁶ Hab. ii. 1.

upon us. And far better shall we be employed in girding ourselves to the discharge of the practical obligations of prophecy, than in minutely tracing out the conjectured period and mode of its fulfilment, and in attempting to narrow its wide and comprehensive sphere by uncertain application to the little particularities of our own time and place. Is there no danger, while fixing the dates, and describing the circumstantial of the grand coming events—lest we forget that every page of prophecy is a direct personal revelation to our own souls, and lest we too slightly regard those clearest predictions of the sacred page—the promises of God to his people, and his threatenings to the unbelieving world? May not even the comprehensive rule of “seeking first the kingdom of God,” in “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” be sometimes unhappily subordinated to the absorbing interest awakened by the glowing prospects of the Millennial reign?

How much has been lost to the church by a speculative contemplation of the prophetic view of the doctrine of our Lord's second advent! If, instead of filling up the outlines more from the resources of imagination than from the substance of Scripture, the faith of the church had been singly fixed upon the glory of this consummating event, and intensely exercised in the glow of expectancy, how different would have been her aspect at the present moment! What a bond of union would have subsisted among her members! What an atmosphere of love would have pervaded her territory! What a spring of holy consecration would have been in extended activity! It ill becomes servants, looking for the return of their absent lord, to spend themselves in discussing the mode and circumstantial of his coming, when they might be far more suitably employed in preparing the house for his reception, and in readiness to give an immediate answer to his welcome knock!

The obscurity that hangs over the precise period of our Lord's coming is indeed a most wise and gracious dispensation, to invigorate the church in every age with the high privilege and obligation of looking for this triumphant crisis. Whatever views therefore tend merely to captivate the imagination, to gratify curiosity, and thus to divert the attention from the present duties connected with this anticipation—these must be regarded as the unscriptural delusions of man's conceit. This spirit of constant expectancy may be considered as the perfecting feature of the Christian character.³ It concentrates all the practical and animating exercises of the Gospel. What an encouragement does it supply to the assurance of faith!⁴ What a stimulus to activity,⁵ devotedness,⁶ abounding love,⁷ heavenly conversation,⁸ sobriety of spirit,⁹ readiness of habit,¹⁰

¹ Matt. vi. 38. Romans xiv. 17, with Luke xvii. 21.

² Luke xii. 35, 36.

³ See 1 Cor. i. 7.

⁴ Heb. x. 37, 38.

⁵ Matthew xxv. 35—40. Luke xix. 13—26. 2 Peter i. 5—11.

⁶ Rev. xvi. 15; xxii. 7.

⁷ 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. Compare James v. 9.

⁸ Phil. iii. 20, 21. 2 Peter iii. 11—14.

⁹ Luke xxi. 34. Phil. iv. 5. 1 Thess. v. 1—8. 1 Peter i. 13; iv. 7.

¹⁰ Luke xii. 35—40.

and watchful preparation for eternity!¹ What support does it furnish in the hour of trial, whether from the immediate visitations of God,² or the persecuting enmity of man!³ What materials does it give for personal edification,⁴ compassionate labors for the unconverted,⁵ and mutual exhortation⁶ and comfort⁷ in the church of God! How cheering is the prospect which it holds out of complete transformation into the image of our beloved Lord!⁸ What patient hope⁹ and joyful anticipation¹⁰ does it bring into the waiting soul! So eminently practical—so richly consolatory—is the believing and habitual contemplation of the coming of our Lord! Indeed when we realize the hope of body and soul at this blissful era being equal participants of the eternal redemption¹¹—the happiness of every member of the body consummated in the complete glorification of the whole body—and the church, “filled with all the fulness of God,” presenting to the universe the entire “fulness of Him that filleth all in all”¹²—we may well conceive, that never was an event so joyful known on earth since the fall of man. We wonder not that “the whole creation,” now “groaning and travailing together in pain” under the ruins of sin, should then be awakened to joyful exultation in its “deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”¹³

This scriptural privilege of expectancy was however inculcated upon the church, while the event which it contemplated could only be seen through the long vista of some thousand years. It was intended therefore, not necessarily to imply the approach of the grand crisis,¹⁴ but to mark the habit of mind with which it should be awaited. The delineation of this habit which has just been given, evidently includes all the essential principles of sanctification and of happiness. We cannot therefore but see sufficient reason for the large space which the event occupies in the enforcement of Christian obligation, and the prospects of Christian hope. Our divine Saviour is brought eternally near to his people.¹⁵ His perfect likeness is the immediate consequence of his vision.¹⁶ His glory is their everlasting joy.¹⁷

It is painful to reflect, that a speculative study of prophecy should have so materially injured the influence of those prospects of the church upon her present duties and privileges. The minute descriptive details, that have been sometimes connected with the coming of Christ in his kingdom (not to speak of their doubtful scriptural authority, and their closer alliance to earth than

¹ Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13. Luke xxi. 36. 1 Thess. v. 9—18. Rev. xvi. 15.

² 1 Thess. iv. 13. ³ 2 Thess. i. 6—10. ⁴ Jude 14, 15, with 20, 21.

⁵ Ibid. with 22, 23. ⁶ Heb. x. 25. ⁷ 1 Thess. iv. 16—18; v. 8—11.

⁸ Phil. i. 6; iii. 21. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. 1 John iii. 2.

⁹ 2 Thess. iii. 5. James v. 7, 8.

¹⁰ Isaiah xxv. 9; xxvi. 19. Luke xxi. 28. Rom. xii. 11. Titus ii. 13.

¹¹ Romans viii. 23. Phil. iii. 21. ¹² Eph. iii. 19; i. 23.

¹³ Psalm xcvi. 11—13; xcvi. 5—9. Rom. viii. 21, 22

¹⁴ See the mistake on this point corrected in the Thessalonian church, 2 Thess. ii. 1—2.

¹⁵ Rev. iii. 12; vii. 15—17.

¹⁶ 1 John iii. 2.

¹⁷ Matthew xxv. 21. John xvii. 24. Rev. iii. 21.

to heaven) have a strong tendency to repress a spiritual contemplation of this great event.¹ Even the details given in the prophetic books are much under the veil. Interpreters expound them according to the principles of their different systems: and after all their diligence and labor, much is left unexplained, or resting upon conjectural support. In these things the writer is content to "walk by faith, not by sight."² All that is necessary is revealed. We shall be as happy as God can make us. As to any precise knowledge, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."³ And such knowledge we want not. It exhibits a far more enlarged expectancy to be assured, that it will be something that we neither know nor can know—interminable bliss without sin, and with Christ. Our happiness centres in the certainty and glory, not in the circumstantial, of the event. And surely the "shaking of earth and heaven,"⁴ which seems to be at hand, will quicken the cry for our expected Lord—"Come quickly, take to thyself the kingdom, and reign with all thy saints." The waiting Christian, in these times of special trial of the church, "lifts up his head" full of joy and expectation.⁵ Faith overcomes the tremendous thought of wrath and judgment, as the harbingers of his coming;⁶ and still the cry is re-echoed to the solemn declaration—"Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."⁷

III.—ON CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICAL RELIGION.

MISS GRAHAM's correspondence, flowing in an easy and natural strain, will be generally interesting. Even where no striking features are visible, an affectionate earnestness, tender sympathy, and a direct application of the first principles of the Gospel to the several cases of her friends cannot fail of being observed.

The following letter appears to have been written to a friend, newly awakened to concern for her eternal interests.

‘November, 1826.

“I fancy that you have for some time past felt a conviction, that religion is something more than you used to think it, more than the world in general seem to think it. But yet perhaps, you do not see

¹ Bishop Hall's beautiful meditations were not less suited to our day than to his—"O blessed Saviour, what a strange variety of conceits do I find concerning thy thousand years' reign! What riddles are there in that prophecy, which no human tongue can read! Where fix to the beginning of that marvellous millenary, and where the end, and what manner of reign it shall be, whether temporal or spiritual, on earth or in heaven, undergoes as many constructions as there are pens that have undertaken it. How busy are the tongues of men! How are their brains taken up with the endless construction of this enigmatical truth, when in the mean time the care of the spiritual reign in their hearts is neglected. O my Saviour, while others weary themselves with this disquisition of thy personal reign upon earth for a thousand years—let it be the whole bent and study of my soul, to make sure of my personal reign with thee in heaven to all eternity.

² 2 Cor. v. 7.

³ 1 John iii. 2.

⁴ Heb. xii. 26, 27.

⁵ See Luke xxi. 28.

⁶ 2 Thess. i. 8. Rev. i. 7.

⁷ Rev. xxii. 20.

very clearly, what more it is that religion requires of you. You see that there is nothing in this vain world capable of satisfying the desires of your immortal spirit ; but you do not clearly comprehend what there is in religion to satisfy all our desires. You seek the Lord ; but you do not yet feel as if you had found Him. You probably spend much time in reading the Scriptures ; but sometimes they seem obscure and unintelligible, sometimes dry and uninteresting. You often pray ; but do not always find either comfort or delight in prayer. Sometimes you feel as if you could give up every earthly enjoyment for one glimpse of that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and at other times it seems to you very foolish and unreasonable to pretend to more religion than other people. This is what many feel who are beginning to be very anxious about religion. I cannot help indulging a strong hope, that you will soon find in the love of Jesus all that you want to make you happy ; only let me beg of you to seek Him simply, under the conviction that we can neither do nor think anything good without Him ; that "every thought is evil, only evil, and that continually;"¹ and that, while we continue in this state, we cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, because they will appear "foolishness to us."² The change which every person must undergo, before they can truly receive Christ as their Saviour, is described in terms no less striking—"Ye must be *born again.*"³ "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a *new creature* ; old things are passed away ; behold ! all things are become new!"⁴ In other parts it is described as a change from death unto life, "from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God."⁵ But I will not multiply instances. Surely such a change as this cannot be the cold, wordly, heartless religion, with which the generality of people sit down satisfied ! Surely it is a change we have no power to make in ourselves. When God "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life," it was a wonderful act of his creating power.⁶ But when he breathes spiritual life into the soul of one "dead in trespasses and sins," this seems more wonderful ; and yet this is what we vainly think we can do ourselves. But if we can once be convinced, that we are so utterly worthless and sinful, that none but Christ can save us, then we shall go to Him for everything. If we want repentance, wisdom, holiness, salvation, all these are His to give ; He promises to give them to every one that asks Him. O be much in prayer to this precious Saviour ! He has declared, that none shall seek him in vain. Those who leave trusting off in themselves, and cling with a single and undivided heart to the cross of Christ, and "count everything else but loss, so they may win Christ and be found in Him"⁷—what words can describe their blessedness ! How true it is, that those who seek happiness in any-

¹ Gen. vi. 5.² 1 Cor. ii. 14.³ John iii. 7.⁴ 2 Cor. v. 17.⁵ Acts xxvi. 18.⁶ Gen. ii. 7.⁷ Phil. iii. 7—9.

thing except Christ Jesus, are “ hewing out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water !” Come then, my most dearly loved friend, come with me to “the fountain of living waters”—come to Him who has said—“ If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink”¹—as if he had said—‘ If there be any poor sinner, who has begun to find out that the pleasures of this world cannot quench his thirst after happiness, if he long for something less vain and empty and unsatisfying, let him come unto me.’ Do you desire to give yourself to Christ, to make Him your all in all ? Then let not any fears or misgivings keep you away from Him, for He “waits to be gracious” to you. Your sins need not keep you away ; for He came to call sinners. He calls Himself the friend of sinners : and indeed, till you are taught by his Spirit, how exceedingly sinful you are, you cannot prize Him as you ought. Let me entreat you often to dwell on the “precious promises” of Scripture. Remember, that “in Him all the promises are yea and amen ;” and if we plead in his name for their fulfilment, the truth and faithfulness of God who cannot lie stand engaged to perform them for us. There is one in particular which seems to me full of encouragement ; it describes so fully the state of heart we want, and promises to give what it describes to those who inquire of the Lord. See Ezek. xxxvi. 25—37.’

The next letter is of a later date, and implies a more distinct advance of Christian knowledge in her friend.

‘ Let me use the privilege of friendship, and entreat you to look less at the dark side of your prospects, and more at the unspeakable mercies with which God has favored you ; particularly that he has given you the greatest blessing he has to give, in calling you to become his reconciled child by faith in Christ Jesus. And having given you an interest in his Son, “shall he not with him freely give you all things ?”²—all things that are good for you, my dear friend. If therefore your wishes are not satisfied, it must be, because it is not for your good to satisfy them. Your lot has been chosen out for you by one, who is infinitely wise and kind, as the very best for your present and eternal happiness, and “He doeth all things well.” You will ultimately find peace in religion ; I am sure you will ; and in the meantime is it not a blessing that you are not permitted to take up your rest here, and find the false destroying peace, which so many experience in wordly enjoyments ? What if you were to ask God in Christ’s name for the fulfilment of such a promise as this—“Behold, I will bring in health and cure, and I will heal him, and will reveal unto him the abundance of peace and of truth”³—would he deny you ? Considering that no promise of scripture “is of private interpretation”—not meant for one part of the church, or one age of it, but for the whole flock of Christ *now*, and every member of it, and therefore for *you*—considering too, “that all the promises of God are yea and amen to us in Christ Jesus ;”⁴ and

¹ John vii. 37.

² Romans viii. 32.

³ Jer. xxxiii. 6.

⁴ 2 Cor. i. 20.

that Christ himself has said—"If ye shall ask anything in my name, *I will give it you*"¹—what encouragement have we to take these promises to God in prayer, to wrestle with him, and declare with holy confidence—"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"² Oh! he would bless you; and his "blessing maketh rich, and *he addeth no sorrow with it.*"³ My dear friend, you must come to God thus, and "give him no rest," till he grant you the promised blessing. You must not take a denial. May the Spirit of prayer be abundantly poured out upon you! It is our privilege to take our sins and sorrows, and cast them upon Christ; he has already borne their agonizing weight; why should we groan under them? "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Would that I could act as I advise! But I fall very, very far short. Even my desires after this state of mind are miserably faint and cold; but let us both take comfort in the reflection, that we are accepted *in Christ*; "complete in him";⁴ beloved, not for *our* deservings, but for *his*;⁵ and his are "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." When we fail, Christ remains the same; and it is for the sake of what he has done, that God will accept us; not for anything we can do; or we might indeed go mourning all the day long.⁶

These letters mark the general tone of Miss Graham's correspondence, in affectionate counsel and Scriptural encouragement. The case to which they primarily refer is among the most difficult and delicate within the compass of Christian instruction. No service is more valuable to the sincere but intelligent inquirer, than to enter into his case with tenderness, forbearance, and anxious consideration of his difficulties. Vague and ill-defined directions throw but little light upon his path. Even the primary and immediate counsel, guiding him to the Saviour of sinners, needs a present and particular application to his individual state. His difficulties will, indeed, vary according to his simplicity, sincerity, and earnestness. But, under all circumstances, the *instant duty of believing in Christ* must be inculcated. No deficiency of spiritual apprehensions must be allowed to hinder immediate attention "to this work of God."⁶

¹ John xiv. 14.

² Gen. xxxii. 26.

³ Prov. x. 22.

⁴ Colossians ii. 10.

⁵ Ephesians i. 6.

⁶ John vi. 28, 29. This instant duty of believing is however questioned by some of our modern religionists—either as seeming to imply a natural power to believe, or as inconsistent with the manifest inability to believe without a Divine principle. But our Lord inculcated the duty upon the unbelieving multitude, in this passage, *in answer to their professed inquiry upon the subject of duty.* He subsequently enforced it upon the same class of hearers (John xii. 36, with 37–40.) Besides, as sin is the neglect or resistance of obligation, if faith be not the duty of the unconverted, unbelief is not their sin—consequently—not what the Gospel repeatedly declares it to be—the primary ground of their condemnation (John iii. 18, 19; xii. 48; xvi. 8, 9; 2 Thessalonians ii. 10, 11.) This system of measuring duty by ability, and of admitting inability to cancel obligation, equally annuls every exercise of love and obedience, by which man is connected with his God, but for which he is no less incapacitated, than for the spiritual habit of faith. It argues also a forgetfulness of the justice of the Divine requirements, and of the responsibility of that sinful inclination, which constitutes the principle of his impotency to comply with them. The commission of the Gospel is an universal call both to repentance and faith. (Mark i. 15; xvi. 15, 16; Acts xvii. 30.) The cross of Christ is held up to the whole world. (Isaiah xlvi. 22.) The Holy Spirit employs its awakening and attractive influ-

The Gospel was not intended to answer the question—"What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?"¹ But it affords a satisfactory reply to a question more nearly interesting to the condition of a sinner—"How can man be just with God?"² It opens, by the instrumentality of faith, a free, immediate, universally accessible way to favorable acceptance with our offended God. No perplexing course of preparatory discipline is required. All are invited without limitation, without delay. Infinite mercy and grace are provided for infinite need. Only those that feel will ask; and all that ask shall have. Thus a sense of sin is the prerequisite, without which no man will come (for "the whole need not the physician");³ but it is no part of the warrant to come. The Scripture has nowhere prescribed any uniform rule, or measured out the precise extent of necessary conviction. All constitutions are not formed alike; and therefore pungency is no certain proof of sincerity. Many are brought without a process of painful exercise to a simple and clear reception of the truth.

The soul is as welcome to Christ at the first moment of invitation as at any successive period; and protracted conflict manifests only the stubborn power of unbelief—a sin, which the spirit of God will not fail to apply as matter of humiliating conviction.⁴ To insist therefore upon a determined measure or intensity of well-defined conviction as a preparation to faith, is an infringement upon the freeness and simplicity of the Gospel. The law also, as the instrument to produce this conviction,⁵ must be used in immediate connection with Christ. *He* is the life; and if he be not set forth at the commencement, there will be only the temporary and unsatisfactory change from a state of indifference to a state of bondage, without any effective principle of holiness or of privilege; and the man will be satisfied without that entire simplicity of faith and self-dedication so indispensable to salvation. Even in the exhibition of Christ, the mind of the inquirer must be diverted from a too minute and anxious analysis of its own exercises of faith to a fixed contemplation of the glorious Person presented to view. The emphasis of the invitation is, "Look—Come unto me."⁶ The first sensation of rest will be connected not with a precise knowledge of our own feelings, but with an entire dependence upon the work of Christ. Though self-examination is intimately connected with the prosperity and advance of the Christian life; yet it must never be employed to originate our peace and hope in the Gospel; but to ascertain the reality of our hope; to detect false confidence and backsliding; to bring to us the warranted enjoyment of "the testimony of our consciences," in regard to the consistency of our profession;⁷

ence as the means of quickening sinners to life. (John xii. 32.) Thus the grace of God is glorified, while the wilful unbelief of man alone excludes him from the free justification of the Gospel, and consequently leaves him without excuse.

¹ Mark x. 17.

² Job ix. 2.

³ Matthew ix. 12.

⁴ See John xvi. 8, 9.

⁵ See Rom. iii. 20; vii. 7. Galatians iii. 24. Compare Matthew xix. 17—20.

⁶ Isaiah xlvi. 22. Matt. xi. 28.

⁷ See 2 Cor. i. 12.

and to mark our progress in knowledge, experience, and practical devotedness. One further point connected with the case of the inquirer is of indispensable moment. He may be assured, that there is no indefinitely future period—no “day of the Lord’s power” more favorable for his acceptance than the present; and that no deficiency of knowledge can acquit him of the obligation of an instant surrender of himself to God. *This very moment the Lord demands his unreserved faith, and his whole heart; and every delay brings a fresh charge of guilt, widens the distance, and increases the difficulty.*

The following letter, written about two months before her death, gives an interesting view of her own search after truth, and marks a discriminating apprehension of the Gospel.

‘*Stoke Fleming, Oct. 1830.*

‘I am grieved that you should for a moment imagine that I think our dear — must be lost, because she does not subscribe to the doctrines of Calvin. I do not myself so much as know what all Calvin’s doctrines are, or whether I should subscribe to them myself. I have read one book of Calvin’s, many parts of which pleased me much; I mean his Institutes, which Bishop Horsley says ought to be in every clergyman’s library. Further than this I know nothing of Calvin, or his opinions. I certainly did not form one single opinion from his book, for I had formed all my opinions long before from the Bible.¹ You may remember my telling you that some years ago I declined greatly, almost entirely (inwardly) from the ways of God, and in my breast was an infidel, a disbeliever in the truths of the Bible. When the Lord brought me out of that dreadful state, and established my faith in his word, I determined to take that word *alone* for my guide. I read nothing else for between three and four months, and the Lord helped me to pray over every word that I read. At that time, and from that reading, all my religious opinions were formed, and I have not changed one of them since. I knew nothing then of Calvin. I have said so much, dear —, because I think it a very wicked thing to do, as you seem to think I do, to call Calvin or any man “master on earth,” or to make any human writer our guide in spiritual things. Christ only should be our master, and his word our guide, and his Spirit our teacher; and that Holy Spirit will be given to us if we ask for it. But I suppose by the doctrines of Calvin you meant the doctrine of predestination, which Calvin, in common with many other of God’s saints, believed and preached. My belief and settled opinion about predestination, you will find expressed more clearly than any words of mine can do, in John vi. 37, 39. 65. Rom. viii. 28—30. Rom. ix. Eph. i. 3—6, 11. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. Titus i. 1, 2. 1 Peter i. 2—5. 1 John iv. 19. Rev. xvii. 8. John xv. 16. I also join in every word of the 17th Article of our

¹ See chap. ii.

church ; so much so, that if asked my opinion about predestination, I should give it in those very words, from the impossibility of finding any others, which in so short a space expressed my meaning so well. But as this article is only of *human* authority, I should therefore bring forward the proof from the Scriptures of that God who cannot lie. I have just given you a few texts as they struck me. They are, I believe, enough for my present purpose : but detached texts lose much of their power : it is the whole sense of the whole Bible that should determine us ; and since "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, (for they are *foolishness* to him)," let us pray to become spiritual, "that we may know the things that are freely given us of God."¹ The above texts will give you an idea of my opinion. Indeed some of them are exceedingly plain and strong, and full, in their account of the doctrine. I endeavor to receive them as a little child, in their plain literal meaning.

But to return to our dear —— ; I think the doctrine of election *essential* to the *comfort* and *consistency* of our walk with God ; because I deem it essential to receive the whole Bible, and every truth contained in every part of the Bible, without partiality or gainsaying. But I do not consider a belief in the doctrine *essentially necessary* to salvation. I *do* consider a simple trust in the atonement and righteousness of Jesus Christ as *absolutely necessary* to salvation. If then, dearest ——, your beloved friend and mine too (for I do most sincerely love her), possesses this simple reliance on the death and obedience of Christ for salvation, doubt not that she will be saved ; though she may not yet have been able to receive those high and humbling doctrines which very few Christians do receive in the commencement of their course,² and which some cannot to the very end thoroughly embrace. Many, however, I think embrace the actual doctrine, though they cannot bear the words predestination, election, &c. : a strange dislike, since both words happen to be taken from Scripture. My beloved —— would have been quite distressed, had I supported the doctrine of predestination in my conversations with her *under the name of predestination* ; and yet we often conversed on the thing itself, and subjects connected with it ; nor did I find her ideas differ greatly from mine. "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, Jesus Christ." All who are built on this foundation, who are thus founded on the Rock of Ages, must be secure. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts. xvi. 31, &c. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life ; and he that

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14 with 12.

² In the early stage of her own course this holy doctrine had excited much repugnance, though she was afterwards enabled to receive it with a most simple and child like faith, and to set it forth (as we have before remarked) with a clearness of statement and power of argument, that marked the richness and maturity of her theological views (See her Freeness of Divine Grace, referred to at p. 55.) She observes to her cousin the stimulus and support which she had received from this doctrine in seasons of distressing deadness in her spiritual apprehensions.

believeth *not* the Son, *shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" John iii. 36. See also John iii. 15, 16, 18 ; v. 24 ; vi. 40, 47 ; xi. 25, 26, &c.'

The two next letters are of the class of those which were formerly adduced in illustration of her clear apprehensions of scriptural truth. The first letter introduces some incidental notices of interest. It seems to have been written to the correspondent whom she had formerly addressed on the subject of Christian study.

‘*Stoke Fleming, Jan. 4, 1827.*

‘**MY OWN DEAR FRIEND,**

‘Every letter I receive from you gives me fresh cause of thankfulness, and increases my hope, that you have learnt of Him who teacheth, and will certainly never leave you till he has given you that “joy and peace in believing,” which all His children sooner or later experience. I trust that the love of my God to you will be a constant source of thanksgiving and self-abasement to me : for oh ! what thanks can I render to Him, for the love with which he is now calling you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son ? And how can I ever be sufficiently humbled, when I reflect how unfaithfully and inconsistently I have acted towards you ? One instance in particular is now fresh in my memory. You once asked me to write to you ; and I put it off from day to day, till at last I wickedly persuaded myself that I could not do it at all. I hope you will forgive this cruel neglect, “as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you ;” and that we shall be enabled henceforth, to love and help one another in His strength, and for His sake.

‘Dear——, how can you say that I am your dearest friend, and only comforter ? I glory in the thought, that you have a friend, whose love is stronger than death, and a Comforter, who is able to make you rejoice with joy unspeakable ; and to whose blessing and influence we must refer it, that such poor helpless and sinful creatures as we are, can ever be of the slightest use in helping or comforting each other. I know you long to call Jesus your Friend, and the Holy Spirit your Comforter ; and where does this longing come from ? Not surely from your own evil heart ; for from that corrupt source can proceed nothing but hatred or indifference to God and His ways. Besides, it is a feeling you once knew nothing of. Believe me—rather believe the Scriptures when they say—that every desire of the soul after God is inspired by Himself, and is the fruit of His own free love in Christ Jesus—“I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; *therefore* with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me ; I will in no wise cast out.”¹ Now, do you not

¹ Jer. xxxi. 3; John xv. 16; vi. 44, 37.

feel yourself drawn towards God ? Does not your heart sometimes choose Christ in preference to every earthly blessing ? Do you not come to Christ in prayer, beseeching Him to receive you ? And do not the texts I have mentioned, with a thousand others of the same import, warrant the inference—that you “come” to Christ, because the Father hath given you to Christ, and draws you to him ; that He “draws you with loving-kindness, because he has loved you with an everlasting love ;” and finally, that He will “never cast you out ?” My dear friend, I would not, indeed I would not, flatter you with a false hope. I know of nothing so melancholy as the way in which the world say—“Peace, peace ; to themselves, when there is no peace”¹—no rational ground of hope. But the hope of a soul convinced of sin, renouncing all trust in its own righteousness, and casting itself on the mercy of Jesus, cannot be a vain or presumptuous hope ; because it is founded on the word of God. You say, you feel so wicked and so worthless, that you dare not hope. Now till you felt yourself to be both exceedingly wicked and worthless, you could not be a fit object of Christ’s grace, who says, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”² I know that many, when they first come to a sense of their own sinfulness, think something in this way : ‘Christ will never receive so vile a sinner as I am : I must repent, and pray, and try to make myself a little better ; and then perhaps I may deserve his favor.’ Alas ! they know not that repentance and prayer are his free gifts, and instead of praying for the pardon we receive, are themselves a part of it. Would it not have been as reasonable for the leper to have waited, till he could cleanse himself from his leprosy ; the blind man, until his sight was improved : or the sick of the palsy, till he could take up his bed and walk, before they would come to Jesus to be healed ? The first chapter of Romans, from the 18th to the 32nd verse, gives an awful description of the state of every man’s heart by nature ; and though education and the restraints of civilized society have prevented the breaking out of sin in the dreadful and open way in which it was indulged among the heathen, still I think every person awakened to a sense of sin, will perceive in it, as in a glass, their own image : at least they will acknowledge, that the seed of every sin is in their heart, especially that most unnatural and truly diabolical sin, of “worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator.” And lest we should imagine that living in a country where God is known, and joining in acts of outward religion, can make the heart really better, till it is converted to God ; the Apostle goes on, in the second and third chapters, to prove that the Jew is no better than the Gentile ; that “there is no difference ; every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.” And it is immediately after having given us such an awful

¹ Jer. vi. 14.

² Matt. ix. 12, 13.

view of our state, in the sight of God, that he goes on to hold out free and unconditional salvation, to all who simply trust in the death and righteousness of Christ. But I doubt not, you will soon perceive, to your comfort, how very free the offers of grace in the Gospel are. I cannot forbear mentioning one more instance ; it is in the parable of the two debtors, in the seventh of Luke—"And when they had *nothing to pay*, he *frankly forgave* them all." It is when we are brought to this feeling, that we "have nothing to pay," that our hearts are in a fit state to receive with eagerness and delight the "frank forgiveness" of our Saviour ; then we give Him all the glory of it. Surely you and I feel ourselves to be in the situation of the debtors who owed most. We have nothing to pay ; and sometimes I think I can even rejoice in this extremity of poverty, since it hides pride and boasting from me, and makes the mercy of God appear so divinely infinite. I do not know, that you have any reason for fancying that you shall die young : but though the thoughts of death are useful to all, and delightful to those whose sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake, I think we ought rather to be willing to live as long as our heavenly Father pleases, in hopes of being the means of bringing others to Him.

'I am glad you like your pupils so much. I feel incompetent to give you any advice about them : I believe the great thing is to pray much for them, that they may have that grace, which alone can make the Sabbath a delight. We should also pray with them, and let them see that we are very anxious about their salvation, and that, though we attach much importance to their progress in other things, we look upon them all as nothing in comparison with the knowledge of Christ. Children sometimes take much pleasure in answering a few simple questions on a chapter they have read ; and in this way very little children may be made to comprehend a great deal. Many of the parables, types, and emblems in Scripture are particularly adapted to their capacities, and afford them great delight. I have seen a little child, who would have been tired to death with a serious discourse, listen for a long time with unwearied attention, whilst being told in its own childish language, how Christ compared himself to a vine, and his people to living branches ; or how Christ as the good Shepherd, "gathers the lambs with His arms, and carries them in His bosom."¹ While explaining these things, they should be taught the text or texts referred to ; that so a portion of God's own word may be fixed in their hearts. I think, however, there is nothing more important than to stop as soon as the attention of our little hearers seems to tire. Sometimes the eldest may be set to teach the youngest some verse or hymn. Scripture prints also form a very good resource for Sunday employment. Children are so artless, that we can soon perceive what pleases them most ; and whatever kind of religious conversation or

¹ John xv. 1—5. Isaiah xl. 11.

employment seems particularly to interest them, should be brought out on Sunday, to make it as pleasant a day as possible to them.¹

'I hardly know how to say a word against Jeremy Taylor; he is a great favorite of mine; but I cannot help thinking that his views of the doctrines of Christianity savor too much of monastic severity, and too little of the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus. The times he wrote in may account for these inconsistencies in the writings of so holy a man; but I think they are calculated to increase the melancholy of any one who is unhappy about religion; because there is something so obscure and confused in his ideas upon many important points. I must now, my dear —, bid you farewell; I need not tell you what pleasure it gives me to hear from you; nor how earnestly I wish that you may find the peace and comfort you are seeking. My earnest prayer is that the promised "Spirit of truth" may be with you, to "guide you into all truth." The weaknesses you own to me are exactly what I have felt, and do feel myself; but God will overcome them for us, and enable us to "bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ." I am sometimes afraid that my using so much Scripture language may appear like cant or affectation to you; but I do it, because, when I express myself in the sense, and as much as possible in the words, of Scripture, I have less fear of misleading you, or of mixing my own earthly ideas with the pure and heavenly truths on which we are conversing.'

Again—

'Stoke, Jan. 22, 1827.

'Though I have not yet heard of you, I am sure that all things are going on well with you, since the very God of love is become your God, and will be your Father and guide forever. May you know more and more every day of His forgiving love, and be led to feel that you are with Jesus, "who has loved you, and washed you

¹ On this subject, so embarrassing to many anxious parents, the writer is tempted to transcribe the sentiments of a Christian mother, to whose wisdom, tenderness, discipline, and prayers, he will feel deeply indebted to the end of his days. 'With respect to children's early distinguishing the Sabbath from other days,' as Mrs. Barbauld says on another occasion, 'I think a child should never remember the first time he heard of God,—so it should be with regard to the Sabbath. The remembrance of it may be drawn in almost with the native nutrient, such as by attention to the church bells, the removal of playthings, of mamma's work-box, &c. Little H—, at five years old, of course is beyond all this, and must be talked to in a way which she will understand, and with a determination that the subject should be regarded according to the will of God, not yielding to anything for which she may contend with you. As to little — (not quite two years old,) if he makes sport of pictures, they must be sparingly used. But yet he will soon understand that he must be grave, or he will not have them; and he will learn in time to make observations upon them, which will lead to restraint, especially if he sees his sister's employment under discipline. A pencil perhaps may be allowed him to try to make letters, or to see a church drawn, as it is God's house. The reason of the restraint, and the importance of the distinction of days, will soon be seen. Meanwhile, habit must be the child's teacher. If he cannot discern a serious amusement from a common one, the weekly revolution of the Sabbath will mark a difference. The wrong names which he may give to things is of little moment, provided the distinction in the things is clear and marked.'

from your sins in His own blood!" O my dear friend, my heart is full of joy, when I think that the Lord has taught you to seek happiness in Him. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness"—says this precious Saviour—"for they shall be filled."¹ Therefore from his own words I have a warrant to call you "blessed;" and if He has given you himself, I care not what else He takes from you: knowing, as I do, that you can want nothing that is good for you, while the Lord of life and glory is yours. What a blessed prospect lies before you! The same Spirit that has been showing you the vanity and sinfulness of your own heart, will not stop short there. No; He will "guide you into all truth; He will take of the things of Christ, and show them unto you;" He will "shed abroad the love of God in your heart;" He will, in His own time, "fill you with joy and peace in believing;" He will bring you on "from strength to strength," and "from glory to glory," till at length He removes you hence, to that heaven where you shall see Christ as He is, be like him, and dwell with Him forever.² Now you have nothing to do but to live upon the fulness of Jesus, casting away your own righteousness, which is no better than filthy rags; your own strength, which is mere weakness; and your own wisdom, which is foolishness with God. You must put forth the hand of faith, and lay hold of the righteousness of Jesus, which he offers you as His free gift, Rom. v. 15, 21—His strength, which is sufficient for you. 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. Ephes. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 13. 1 John iv. 4—and His wisdom, which is also freely yours for Christ's sake. 1 Cor. i. 30. Only go on asking Him for more, more still, more of his precious love. He cannot deny it you; for He has said, "that whatsoever ye shall ask in His name, He will give it you."³ You cannot ask too much; for think of the great things the Apostle asked, Ephes. iii. 14—19; yet He concludes all by saying, "Unto Him that *is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.*" Dear —, is not ours a happy lot? "If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? *It is Christ that died;* yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who *also maketh intercession for us.*"⁴ Here is our anchor of hope—Christ died; Christ is risen; Christ intercedes. When Satan or our own evil conscience accuses us, we are too apt to look for comfort to something in ourselves. In this we shall always be disappointed; if we look to Christ, we never shall. May He teach us by His own Spirit how to live by faith in Him! I long to hear from you, and to know whether you have yet been able to find peace in God. This precious gift will, I know, be bestowed upon you. Do tell me all you feel, and let me often have a letter from you; for, believe me, scarcely anything can afford me greater pleasure.

¹ Matthew v. 6.

² John xvi. 13—15. Rom. v. 5; xv. 13. Psalm lxxxiv. 7. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 1 John iii. 2.

³ John xiv. 13, 14.

⁴ Romans viii. 31—34.

'I pray that your communications may always bring me the happy news, that you are more and more devoted to our dearest Lord, in whom may we, my dearest friend, become daily more united. There is a common friendship which is very delightful; but there is a communion of spirit peculiar to those who love the Lord Jesus; and this is what I trust He will grant to us; for it will last, when common friendship has been long withered by the hand of death. May you be blessed with every spiritual blessing, and rooted and grounded *in love!* This is the prayer of, &c.'

The next letter exhibits accurate discrimination, and a high standard of Christian experience.

'I was much interested, my dearest friend, in what you said about mingling earthly with heavenly feelings. It is a difficult question; and one which I am sure I am not fit to answer. Only I think we may in some degree know whether our love is of the right kind or not, by asking ourselves whether it really is God that we love in our friends, and in our communion with them; whether we love those that are in Christ incomparably more than those who are not in him; and whether after all we could give up the society of the very best and dearest of them all, rather than lose one particle of God's favor. Surely we may love our friends, and that most dearly, for God requires it of us; but then "*he that loveth father or mother more than Him is not worthy of Him.*"¹ Love to our friends seems to be the purest earthly feeling: yet I think, if we find ourselves enjoying devotion in its social privileges, more than in personal communion with God, our devotion cannot have been altogether of a spiritual character. But while we lament over the weakness and inconsistency, which spoil our holiest actions, and defile the sweetest affections God has given us, let us take comfort in the thought, "that we have not an high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."² "He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust,"² and (what should raise our gratitude to the highest pitch) he himself has been made dust, like unto our miserable dust in all things, except sin, on purpose that he might be able to "have compassion on the ignorant, and on those who are out of the way." There is such a clear view given to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews of the twofold nature of the Lord Jesus, that I derive unspeakable comfort from studying it. Scarcely any book makes me see so clearly that he is the Lord God "dwelling in light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen or can see;" and yet that he is "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh;" able to enter into my feelings, to pity my weaknesses, and to sympathize with me in my temptations. Oh, if we could but dwell upon the wonder more! it is the "wisdom of God, and the power of God." "Angels desire to look into it;" "the spirits of the just" are forever learning more about it; and I know of nothing

¹ Matt. x. 37.

² Heb. iv. 15. Psalm ciii. 14.

so likely to make the souls of God's people here like those who are above, as the continual contemplation of this marvellous love of God, in manifesting himself in the flesh. Dear M——, how soon we shall see him face to face, "whom having not seen we love!" Let us seek to become intimately acquainted with him here. Let us be often conversing with him, and always near to him, that he may not have to say to us—"I never knew you." He will never say this to us; but our watchful enemy may in some dark hour suggest such a thing to us; and then how delightful to be able to refute such a suggestion, by the memory of all the intimate communion we have enjoyed with Jesus! to be able to appeal to this dearest friend himself, that so far from never having known him, we have known, desired, loved nothing else in comparison with him! Would that this were my case now! But I feel as far away from Jesus, as if he were quite a stranger to my soul. My heart seems bent to backslide; and I cannot help continually thinking of that bitter complaint of Job's—"Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when, by his light, I walked through darkness!"¹ Still I know that God "will heal my backsliding, and love me freely;"² for though I am changed, "He changes not."³ But how strange it is, that our hearts should ever be so alienated from God, after having once known how sweet it is to love him! Surely the character of long-suffering, so often given to God in the Scriptures, has never been manifested by any one in so many instances as to me. Let us not forget, dearest M——, to pray for one another, "that our hearts may be knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding,"⁴ that we may daily increase in the "knowledge of Him, whom to know is life eternal."

The interesting tone of Christian simplicity which the following letter breathes, is worthy of remark.

'August 4, 1825.

"You will perhaps be surprised to receive a letter so soon after my last. But I feel this morning an irresistible wish to write to you, to which I was moved whilst praying for you; and in the strength of Jesus I will speak to you only of him. Perhaps I shall to-day receive a letter from you: I shall be very glad, because I am so anxious to know that you have devoted yourself in the fullest manner to Him, who gave up his life for you. My dear ——, I do not know whether you are feeling with me; but it is a cheering hope to me, that I, who have so often encouraged you in the greatest sin which a redeemed soul can commit, that of indifference to the service and love of the Redeemer, may now be an instrument

¹ Job xxix. 2, 3.

³ Mal. iii. 6.

² Hos. xiv. 4.

⁴ Col. ii. 2.

in His hands to animate you to very different feelings. We have given way to a very unfaithful spirit in our fears, and in our repugnance to speak in His name. Let us only believe, that when he grants us the inestimable privilege of carrying the blessed news of His Gospel—"it is not we that speak, but the Spirit of our Father which speaketh in us."¹ This feeling that we are nothing, but that He is everything in us, would give us a confidence full of joy, and at the same time without pride. It is indeed the height of happiness to follow him like a little child, to live in Christ, and out of ourselves. Oh, had I but a constant sight of his love! but he "is faithful, who will stablish us, and keep us from evil."² Let us confide in Him; let us tell him that we are not able to move a single step towards Him, that we cannot love Him, nor believe in His name. His goodness will allure us, His power preserve us, His strength will be given us in exchange for our weakness, and we shall find an indescribable delight in being able to do all in Christ.'

To her cousin she writes in this affectionate and encouraging strain :—

'November 27, 1827.

'Let me tell you, my dear friend, how sincerely and affectionately I sympathize with you in the feelings you express with regard to the most important of all subjects. My dearest cousin, go on seeking. There are pleasures, rivers of pleasures, whereof the true Christian drinks with unspeakable delight; and in His own time Jesus, the good Shepherd, will lead you to these fountains of living water. Already He, who "calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out"³ from the world of sin, has called you by His own word, speaking to your soul. Do but be willing, as Levi, "to rise up, leave all, and follow Him";⁴ and you will find that He will lead you in the pleasant and peaceful way. For every vain pleasure that He calls upon you to give up, He will give a thousand solid and real pleasures, which it hath not entered into the worldling's heart to conceive.'

The next letter, written to her cousin, marks the instruction, obligation, and encouragement connected with the hour of "trouble," —that time "to which man is born,"⁵ and when to the unhumbed and unsanctified mind, the resources of the world often aggravate suffering, instead of contributing support.

'March 20, 1825.

'Our meeting, my dear friend, must be deferred to a future time, if ever it takes place in this world. But there is another meeting, to which we may safely look forward, if we are the children of God through Christ Jesus: and this will be in the presence of our best

¹ Matt. x. 20.

² 2 Thess. iii. 3.

³ John x. 3.

⁴ Matt. ix. 9.

⁵ Job v. 7.

and dearest Friend, who so loved us, as to "purchase us with his own blood." How happy, how very happy it would make me, to know that my much-loved cousin was making it the grand object of her life to seek for salvation through the all-sufficient Saviour; and that we were united, not only by the strong ties of relationship and affection, but also by that bond of the Spirit, which makes all the redeemed people of Christ to be of one heart and one soul! Let us pray for this one thing, to be devoted to the Lord Jesus: it is a heaven begun on earth. The severe trial with which it has pleased our gracious God to afflict us,¹ has given us an additional reason to write vanity upon all human hopes and expectations: and I hope I may say, that it has driven us to seek for comfort in those things which alone can give any real relief to a mind under the pressure of grief. Painful indeed it is to speak about anything which brings with it such afflicting recollections. Yet I feel that I cannot, and must not leave it, till I have entreated you, my beloved friend, to join me in seeking a "friend that sticketh closer than a brother," whom no length of time, or adverse circumstances can take from us. Into his gracious ear we may pour all our complaints: "in all our afflictions he will be afflicted."² And one glimpse of his love will enable us to rejoice in the midst of tribulation. But there is one condition—"Give me thine heart."³ He must have all or none. A divided heart he will not accept. A heart that indulges in any one sin, that cleaves to any one worldly vanity, can never be the residence of His pure Spirit: he must have the whole heart, every thought, every faculty, every affection must centre in Him. And who is able to perform this condition? I am sure neither you nor I can; for we are carnal, and "the carnal heart is enmity against God."⁴ Well then, my dear —, let us simply believe on Him to effect all this for us. Let us come to Him as sinners; for "His blood cleanseth from all sin." Let us come as wretched, and poor, and blind; and He "will fill our minds with joy and peace in believing," will give us "gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich,"⁵ and will cause His Spirit to shine into our dark hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."⁶ True, we cannot love Him of ourselves; but He can compel even our hearts to love Him. Oh may He reveal Himself to your soul, and give you such discoveries of His amazing love, as may constrain you to make Him your "all in all!"

In another letter, on the same subject, we find her taking her chair by the side of her afflicted friend, and, like a true daughter of consolation, "comforting her with the same comfort, wherewith she herself had been comforted of God."

¹ Probably alluding to the death of her only brother.

² Isaiah lxiii. 9.

³ Prov. xxviii. 26.

⁴ Romans viii. 7.

⁵ Rev. iii. 18.

⁶ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

‘January 18th, 1828.

‘MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

‘A letter from —, informed me of the very heavy trial you have sustained. I did not like immediately to intrude upon your feelings; and since then, illness has prevented my writing. How I have longed to be with you, and share your grief, though I am sensible of my inability to afford you any consolation! But I could at least have mingled my feelings with yours, and told you, what however you need not be told, that your losses and afflictions must ever be in a measure mine. My beloved friend, would that in partaking, as I most sincerely do, of your sorrow, I could in any way lighten or alleviate it! But I rejoice in the thought, that faith has united you to one, who is the God of comfort; and his Spirit is the Comforter. May he shed abundantly of his precious influence into your heart and your dear sister’s at this trying time! May he “lift up the light of his countenance upon you” both! and that will turn your mourning into gladness. Perhaps this bereavement will lead you nearer to Jesus: for we have an unfailing promise, that “all things shall work together for our good.” “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, even as a father the son *in whom he delighteth*. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*”¹ And then how sweet to be assured, that “in all our afflictions he is afflicted!” that in all our troubles he is near to help; that in all our bereavements he is ready to fill up with himself the painful dreary void, which is made in our hearts! My beloved friend, I do not say these things to you “because you know them not, but rather because you know them,” and are, I trust, at this time living upon them. How vain were it to speak to you of earthly comfort under the heavy loss you have sustained! But this is the very time, when God’s children often drink deepest of heavenly consolation; and I trust it is thus with my precious friend. I know that our heavenly Father has afflicted you in very faithfulness; and though for the present your chastisement must seem “grievous” indeed to you, yet hereafter it shall bring forth in you “the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”² In the meantime may you be taught to lay hold on the gracious invitation to “call upon God in the time of trouble!” Make David’s words your own—“from the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” “My soul trusteth in thee, and in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.” “In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee; *for thou wilt answer me.*”³ And may you, my dear friend, be able to apply to yourself the words of our God—“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. I, even I, am he that comforteth you—as one whom his mother

¹ Romans viii. 28. Heb. xii. 6. Rev. iii. 19.

² Psalm cxix. 75. Hebrews xii. 11. ³ Psalm l. 15; lxi. 2; lvi. 3; lvii. 1; lxxxvi. 7.

comforteth, so will I comfort you." "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee *for a moment*; but with *everlasting* kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."¹ I would not obtrude my own words upon you upon an occasion like this. But I may hope that the Spirit of truth will bless his words to your comfort; so I fear not to tire you with the repetition, for they are always new,—"O God, thou art my God."² Here is a balm for every wound; yes, he is your God. Wisdom and tenderness shall form the basis of all his dealings towards you; and he, who is so wise and so tender, is engaged to do you nothing but good all the days of your life. I did not mean to have written so much, knowing that even the sympathy of friendship may sometimes be an interruption to our own feelings. But I now leave off, begging you to accept the warmest affection of, &c.'

How delightful is the confidence, which Miss Graham here expresses in the support of the simple word of God in the hour of affliction! Though her letter affords some of her own beautiful thoughts, yet her main effort is perceptible throughout; not to strain her mind to force out something original or striking, but to bring forward the encouraging promises of scripture, as far more powerful than the product of her own thought. *This is honoring the word of God.*

The next letter relates personally to herself, and gives a lively description of her state of mind, with a happy transition from her own playful spirit, to a more serious and edifying strain.

'April, 1827.

'I am sure that I am very old for my age. It is not common at twenty-four to live upon the past as I do. Most people would rather feed upon pleasant hopes of the future, but that is a thing I never do without trembling. It is not that I have the least doubt of everything being ordered for my happiness; but I dread passing my life in this painful uncertainty; and I think this requires more faith than to pass it in the most severe affliction. Besides, I am afraid of living in a kind of tertian fever: for either I am very hot or very cold. I am incapable of an equal temperament in anything. A person who knows me this month would not know me the next. I do not know myself; God knows me; he knows all my weaknesses, all my vanity: however, all this does not cause him to forsake me. When I stray, he seeks me; when I return, he receives me with tenderness; when I doubt, he assures me; when I am unhappy, he consoles me. Surely he can give me strength to devote myself wholly to him, and not to turn away again from his ways.'

Another letter affords a beautiful illustration of her spirituality of mind, connected with the recollection of her literary pursuits.

¹ Isaiah xlvi. 10; li. 12; lxvi. 12; liv. 7, 8.

² Psalm lxiii. 1.

'Chudleigh, Sept. 1827.

' You are then at ——, where you lead a very pleasant life, but where you are not happy, because he who is your happiness no longer cheers you with his presence. I also am very gay. I am here to my heart's content ; and I am not happy, because I cannot find my God—my beloved. I find that we "are the salt of the earth;" but that this "salt has lost its savor, and is no longer good for anything, but to be thrown away and trodden under foot of men."¹ But the infinite compassion of Jesus will not suffer it to be so with us, and therefore he causes us to feel incessantly bitter inquietudes, which will not suffer us to rest without returning to him. In the meantime we are both in a new place, which we shall perhaps never see again. Shall we quit this place without leaving there some savor of the name of Jesus Christ ? It is delightful to be able to create recollections as exquisite as those awakened by the beautiful images of Petrarch and Tasso. But it is much more delightful to remember every place, where we have seen some soul converted to God ; this recollection will solace us at a time, when all the delights of our Tasso will appear but a vain dream. I do not say this because I feel as I speak. I see it in my understanding ; but it does not reach to my heart. However, I speak because I desire to feel it, and that you should feel it too. I wish to love Tasso, and our other studies, only for the love of God, and to give all to his service. But I love them too much for myself ; and yet I do not think it would be right to give them up, since they may one day be of use to me.'

We will now present a few letters, which will introduce us to a nearer view of the exercises of her own mind. She appears to have been deeply harassed, in common with the great Apostle, with that painful conflict, which his own inspired pen has so graphically described in Romans vii.—a chapter which—though unintelligible to the world, and even to the merely external professors of the Gospel—unfolds more or less of the secret history of every Christian's heart. The following letter, of an early date, marks her mind exercised in the painful sense of her own deficiencies, while anxiously engaged in the pursuit of that knowledge, which was the basis of all that was valuable, both in her intellectual and spiritual character.

'June, 1823.

' No—I have not yet regained my peace of mind. It is a guest which will not dwell in a soul so weak and vain as mine. I have again read a passage in Mason. But I find, that although self-knowledge is the most excellent kind of wisdom man can possess, yet there is a sort of self-knowledge, which only debases and hardens the soul ; and this is exactly the kind with which I am furnished. And whilst true self-knowledge introduces order and

¹ Matthew v. 13.

light into the soul, as when the sun enlightens the earth ; the self-knowledge which I possess rather resembles the lightning, which shines for a moment, and shows all the desolation which the storm has produced, and which itself increases the desolation. To know one's self miserable, but not to be unwilling to use the means of being happy ; to know one's self a sinner, but to flee from and abandon the Saviour of sinners, has been a true description of my feelings.'

To her cousin she expresses some grounds of thankful recollection for Christians, who are called in "the days of their youth" to the service of their God and Saviour.

'MY DEAREST —. I seem to have so much to say to you, that I scarcely know where to begin. I am not now afraid of indulging in a little effusion of my feelings to you, as they begin to sit less heavy upon my heart. I begin to feel a sort of assurance, that it will ere long be "with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon my head." Yet I cannot tell you that I enjoy anything of really spiritual feeling. *Oh ! that has been too long stifled to awake at once to anything like life and vigor.*¹ Dear —, let us be more careful than we have hitherto been, not to quench the spark of Divine life in our hearts, not to suffer the love of the world to enter where the Holy Spirit has deigned to erect a temple to himself. I must tell you the thought which struck me yesterday, and roused me more effectually than anything for some time past has done. It was a sense of the blessedness of being called in our youth to the knowledge of God, now that our feelings are fresh, and our habits unformed ; before we have entered into the pleasures, company, and temptations of the world. It seems as though we had, through the mercy of our Saviour, being turned from the broad path of destruction while yet upon the threshold—before we could have a long and weary way of sin to retrace. Are not these mercies, which call for our warmest gratitude ? Shall I tell you another light, which then struck me more forcibly than I had ever felt it before ? Is it not a blessing to have been enabled to enter decidedly upon a life of religion, before we had formed any connection contrary to it ? Now everything seems open before us. The narrow path has been for us divested

¹ The writer feels it right to notice this sentence as a subtle form of legality, very prevalent with young Christians, and not unknown to exercised Christians in a higher stage of maturity. The chastisement of the rod is indeed numbered among the rich provisions of the everlasting Covenant (Psalm lxxxix. 30—32) ; and usually the Lord makes the backslidings of his children the instruments of his salutary correction. (Jer. ii. 19.) But let us never seem to dictate to him the mode of his discipline ; and especially let us not limit the absolute and unbounded freedom of the Gospel, which opens *the way of immediate and complete acceptance* to those who deserve a more protracted banishment from his favor. The expectation of an indefinitely distant return paralyzes the present effort ; while the freeness of mercy opens the door of instant hope for the most hopeless, (Isaiah xlvi. 23—25,) and indeed induces the constraining motive to the first step of penitence. (Ibid. xliv. 22.)

of half its difficulties ; and great will be our sin and misery, if we walk not in it with a cheerful devoted resolve, that every future step may be for his glory, who first led us into it.'

The next letter displays the jealous though exquisite enjoyment of her sources of legitimate pleasure in the work of God.

'Hastings, July, 1823.

'I am no longer sad, unless a pleasure too profound for laughter or gayety can be called sadness. There are times when I feel unhappy, because I am so happy—because I can derive such exquisite enjoyment from objects which pass away in a moment, while the things of eternal duration make only a light and fleeting impression on my soul. I cannot, however, forbid myself from enjoying the delights, which here present themselves every minute to my mind ; and you must pardon me if I fatigue you with many absurdities.'

The following allusion to her early attainments cannot fail of interesting the reader.

'There are periods in the life of every person, which have respect only to the intellect, but which affect, however, all the rest of the life, and to which may be traced up almost all the intellectual qualities which that person possesses. It appears to me, that the period to which my mind recurs with the greatest pleasure is that, when I began to learn Milton as a simple act of memory.¹ What a low and unworthy motive ! However, when my soul began to open, to understand a little his noble ideas, so entire a change was made in my inclinations and taste, that I can hardly believe myself to be the same person.'

The next letter gives a profitable application of Scripture, together with an interesting train of remark.

'June, 1823.

'One text of Scripture has lately dwelt much upon my mind, and seemed like a sentence of condemnation upon my worldly-mindedness and inconsistency. It is that short but expressive description of the conversion from sin—"And he rose up, *and left all*, and followed him."² Oh ! what a warning—and yet by me unheeded warning—does it seem to rise and shake off these fetters of sloth and inactivity—to leave all, even the dearest friends, the most deep-rooted habits, which can come in the way of this grand end, and to follow Jesus through affliction and difficulties, in all the meek simplicity and lowly dependence of a little child ! May he give us strength thus to follow his loved steps ! May he enable us to walk hand in hand, mutually encouraging and supporting each other,

¹ See page 12.

² Luke v. 28.

till we come to the presence of his glory, there to abide forever! I well know the feeling you mention with regard to another world. But when thinking of this, I am unfortunately apt to reverse it, and to consider the past as a painful dream, and the present as something too disagreeable to be real; while I look forward to future hopes and schemes till the dreams of my imagination assume the shape of delightful realities; and in stretching forward to them, I forget, that it is only in the sober and continual routine of present duties, that I can hope to attain those delightful expectations.'

Her seasons of prayer appear to have been, in common with all Christians, times of severe conflict. The following extract, after alluding to the blots that too often deform the profession of the Gospel, advertises to this point.

'Torquay, April 12, 1825.

'How many ways there are of dishonoring the Christian profession! some by ill humor; some by coldness; some by immoderate zeal; others by the fear of man. Oh! my dear friend, let us seek to ornament our profession; let us see in the unlimited compassion of our good Shepherd, pardon for our past extreme luke-warmness, and Divine strength to shake off the drowsiness which oppresses us. Not only the prayers which I offer for myself, but those which I offer up for you, seem to be covered with a cloud through which they cannot penetrate. My prayers did I say? I do not pray—I am frightened when I think of the state in which I am. If you are in a more spiritual frame, when at the feet of the Saviour, remember her who is gone so far away.'

To another of her correspondents she thus writes :

'April 30, 1827.

'I can hardly tell you what a strange state I am in—one minute longing after holiness so intensely, that I feel as if I should die if I did not get it: the next so full of vain thoughts, that I hardly know what real spiritual holiness is. I never had such clear views of the extreme depravity of my heart and life. Every day I learn something new about my helplessness and blindness, and dreadful wickedness. But though I can spread these things before God in prayer, I cannot mourn over them; or if I do, it is from a sense of my misery—not from a view of Him whom I have pierced. Well! I know this hardness of heart is a part of the complaint under which I groan, and which will be removed by the great Physician. But I am sometimes confounded by the seemingly contrary answers I receive to prayer, though in the end I feel the dealings of God with me to have been wise and just. For instance—after having prayed much for a sense of sin, I seem to have been left to the power of it. I feel left to strive with a great enemy, who tramples me with the greatest ease under his feet. Let me not un-

justly murmur against my dearest and wisest Saviour. For he leaves me not long at the mercy of my cruel adversary, but appears on my behalf often when I have the least expectation of it. One thing distresses me very much. It is so strange. I have for some time past scarcely ever enjoyed a spiritual sabbath. I often enjoy a sabbath on week-days; but when Sunday comes (I mean the last three or four,) all my spiritual feelings go; religion seems the dullest thing in the world, and vain thoughts the pleasantest; I cannot tell you how the comfort of the day is destroyed. It was the case the whole of yesterday till quite night, when the accidental opening upon this little verse of Toplady's brought back the loveliness of Christ to my thoughts with such sweetness, and filled me with such longings after Him, that for some time I could not sleep:

Less than thyself will not suffice,
My comfort to restore;
More than thyself I cannot crave,
And thou canst give no more.

Oh, to be "filled with all the fulness of God!" to have "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith!" to be temples of the Holy Ghost! To know that this is mine; and yet for want of faith I so often make my heart as a cage of unclean birds. My dearest friend, I have chosen this verse for my portion, my treasure in this world and the next. I recommend it to you; and I know God will give it to us, and abundantly fulfil our wishes above all that we can ask or think—Ezek. xliv. 28. What a glorious portion! Hard as my heart is, and blind as my eyes are, I see and feel a little of its excellence: but then so often my soul forgets her joy, looks back upon the world, and shrinks from the choice, which a few minutes before seemed so unutterably desirable!

At another time she writes in the same strain.

'May 15, 1827.

'I think I would give up every prospect of worldly happiness that I have, or ever can have, to have these vain thoughts crucified and nailed to the cross of Jesus; and yet often, the more I want to be delivered from them, the more obstinately I cleave to them, and I am so soon tired of praying against them. But the everlasting covenant fills me with hope and comfort—"I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."¹

The next letter shortly afterwards is of a similar character. The spirit of tender carefulness that marks the closing allusion is worthy of special remark.

¹ Jer. xxxii. 40; xxxi. 33.

‘*Stoke, June 2, 1827.*

‘I never wanted something to awaken and alarm me so much as I do now. I think I could be content to have some very great affliction, if it would but restore me to communion with God. I told you how much vain thoughts had tempted and annoyed me. When I last wrote to you, I felt confident of being soon made more “than conqueror through him that loved me.” But I have lately left off striving against them; and now having turned “the house of prayer into a den of thieves,” I know not how to cast them out again. Oh! that Jesus himself would drive them from his temple, though it be with a scourge.¹ With regard to —, I feel it more and more my duty to send my letter. But what I have written has been given to me, and I am afraid to finish it, lest I should, in my worldly and unbelieving frame, mix something of my own with it.’

Yet her deep self-abasing apprehensions were not—except, possibly, at seasons of temptation—tinctured with despondency. From the tone of many of the preceding letters it is evident, that she knew the fulness of her resources in the promises of the Gospel: and in her prostrate humiliation of soul she did not cease to plead them to the uttermost of her warranted expectations. Thus she writes to a friend :

‘— and I, and all took the sacrament yesterday. I never felt so much—‘the remembrance of these our misdoings is grievous; the burden of them is intolerable.’ Is it not great and free love, which has made that a burden to us, which was once our delight; and that intolerable, which we once drank up like water? But what puzzles and alarms me is, that it should be sometimes intolerable, and yet not forsaken; and sometimes at the moment when I feel it to be intolerable, the struggle to give it up is *more* intolerable. The only thing that makes me feel a *holy* hatred of sin, is the thought, that, even when it seems sweetest to me, the eye of Jesus beholds it as an evil and a bitter thing; and I shall soon look upon it as He does. It is “that abominable thing which He hates.”² It is that abominable thing which my wretched abominable heart loves. But then I do hate myself for loving it; and I do not know anything I would not thank God for depriving me of, if it would tend to make me see sin as He does. I know this is the way you feel. Then let us take comfort in the thought that Jesus has done something for us, and to us who have (though so little) more will be given. “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;” this often gives me comfort, (as indeed the whole of the eighty-first Psalm does): but then we can no more open our mouths, than we can fill them. God must open them wide, and fill them too. I feel so much comfort in thinking that we cannot open our mouths too wide; we cannot be too greedy of heavenly

¹ John ii. 15.

² Jer. xliv. 4.

food, nor too grasping of heavenly riches. It is not presumption, but faith and humility, to expect that God for Christ's sake will fill our earthen vessels with an eminent measure of his heavenly treasures; and the greatest eminence in Christian grace is to lose sight of self, to be willing to be least of all—to be nothing, and to look upon others as nothing, except as they are in Christ, and to look upon Christ as everything. But oh, how far am I from this! Yet I do not despair. I have had glimpses of it. I trust it shall one day be the settled temper of both our souls. Pray for me, and pray that I may be enabled to pray for you.'

The darkness and conflicts of her mind, were doubtless much increased by the active power of the enemy operating upon her enervated health. It is delightful, however, to mark the cheering irradiations of sunshine breaking in upon her, as marked in the following letter:

‘November 21, 1826.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

‘I can almost say in the words of Scripture, which you love, that the winter of my soul is gone, and that the sweet season of the springing of flowers, and of singing of birds is come, and that the voice of the celestial dove makes itself heard.¹ I again begin to know what it is to walk, “as seeing Him who is invisible.” But do not suppose that I am in a very spiritual state. But the least ray of the light of his countenance appears immense, after so many weeks passed in darkness and rebellion. Oh! my —, let us exert every effort to find again the lover and the beloved of our souls. Who knows but his own time may come, in which he will fully reveal himself to us? Let us pray for each other, that we may be wholly separated from the world and from ourselves, and more closely united to Jesus, in whose strength we shall be able to do all things. I cannot feel that deep repentance that I ought to feel for my repeated transgressions. But even in this I see the Divine love, because every strong emotion affects my health.’

Her views of the power of faith in prayer were most enlivening. ‘I never pray,’—said she one day to a dear friend—‘without a promise.’ On that promise she was enabled to rely with entire confidence. Referring to the fulness and power of the Apostle’s prayer, Eph. i. 17, 18, and to that sublime doxology, chap. iii. 20, 21,—she added, ‘What a prayer was this! How comprehensive! How much are we encouraged to ask for! Why then do we receive so little, but because our hearts are not sufficiently enlarged? We are wanting *in faith*. We do not expect enough from God. We are straitened in ourselves. We are not straitened in God. How much more should we receive, if we “continued instant in prayer,”’

¹ See Cant. ii. 11, 12.

and "prayed without ceasing." We are like the King of Israel, who, when commanded by Elisha to smite on the ground, provoked the wrath of the man of God, by *smiting only thrice, and then staying*. Whereas, had he smitten five or six times, he would not only have gained a temporary advantage over his enemies, but would have utterly destroyed them.¹ Thus in our prayers we are contented with *small success*. We do not continue enough in the exercise. Even when our hearts have been *somewhat enlarged*, we have been too ready to desist, and rest satisfied without persevering till we have received yet larger supplies of Divine grace.'

To another friend she wrote in the same enlarged spirit of Christian expectancy:—

'May 15, 1827.

"I see something of the love of Christ, which I would not lose for worlds. But neither do you or I see half what may be seen of it even in this world, if we ask in faith. Only let us not be afraid of expecting too much. Let us stretch our prayers and expectations to the very uttermost of what "we can ask or think;" and as sure as God is truth, we shall receive "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think."² We shall receive all that Jesus can ask or think."

Her views of Christian assurance, as set forth in the following letter, were clear and scriptural.

'July 4, 1827.

"My mind is in a state of declension and deadness to spiritual things, which is the more awful to me, from having enjoyed much communion with God, a few weeks ago. I know not how to describe this state better than by saying, that prayer seems to be my burden; and evil thoughts my element; and that, instead of maintaining a continued conflict against this inclination, I feel a kind of obstinate hardened disposition in my mind, leading me to yield rather to Satan than to God. But even during all this time, my evidence of being a child of God, though not brought with any realizing sweetness to my heart, yet remains quite clear and unclouded to my understanding. But my evidence is this—not that I am now in a spiritual frame of mind (though that would be a delightful confirmation of it)—but that—let my state be what it will,—still I cannot forget, that I have cast myself a thousand and a thousand times upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. I have committed my soul to him; and, though I am unfaithful and unbelieving, yet I know that he abideth ever faithful, to keep that which has once been committed to him. Besides—I have told him

¹ 2 Kings xiii. 14—19.

² Eph. iii. 02.

again and again—and *that* with agonizing earnestness,—what a weak backsliding heart I have intrusted to his care; and that, if he does not hold me up, I shall fall. And how can I think that he has forgotten all my prayer for keeping, and all his promises of keeping me, and that he means to let me fall forever? Oh! I cannot think so. I cling to my assurance, and cannot but think, that as Christ—and *Christ alone*—is the foundation of it, it must be well-founded. I must think (I would say it with reverence) that God would cease to be “a faithful Creator,”¹ if he could give up a soul that has been so often confided to his keeping. There is one verse, that in the darkest and coldest seasons comes with comfort to my mind. I know that I have often asked my heavenly Father for bread. Shall I think he has given me a stone?² I have asked him for the Spirit of truth. Shall I think he has put me off with the spirit of delusion?

This letter illustrates the true character of Christian confidence, as exclusively based upon the word of God. It is independent of external excitement. It is the reliance of faith upon the immutable engagements of Divine faithfulness. Much that passes under this name is the assurance of feeling, rather than of faith. The consolations of the Gospel *are believed, not because they are declared, but because they are felt.* Hence, when the comfort is lost, the ground of confidence is destroyed. This, however, is an inversion of the scriptural rule—walking by sight, not by faith³—unlike a tried saint of old, who when “walking in darkness, and having no light,” had learnt to “stay himself upon his God”—“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”⁴

Any encouragement, however, to be drawn from a past operation of faith must be carefully connected with its present exercise. Its first effort indeed linked the Christian’s heart in indissoluble union with his Saviour. Yet the principle must not be confined to a single act, by which at some former time *he came* to Christ. It is rather the continued habit of the soul, by which *he is “coming”*⁵ to Christ in constant motion. In Miss Graham’s case, the earnestness and intensity of her mind clearly marked the active though unconscious influence of the habit of faith, even while her recollection was fixed—perhaps too exclusively—upon some former and determinate exercise.

But was Miss Graham warranted in her strong assurance, in a state of conscious and acknowledged backsliding? When we consider the character of her religion—self-suspicious, jealous of declension, earnestly longing for communion with God, content with no *ordinary* measure of conformity to the Divine image, we shall not be disposed to accuse her of presumption, or of a loose and careless profession. Hers was not a paralyzing security—a self-indulgent

¹ 1 Peter iv. 19.

² Luke xi. 11—13.

³ 2 Cor. v. 7.

⁴ Isa. i. 10. Job xiii. 15.

⁵ 1 Peter ii. 4. Comp. Gal. ii. 20.

repose—but an habitual quickness of spiritual discernment, and dutiful watchfulness. It was probably her intense solicitude for higher conformity to her Lord, that induced her, like holy Bradford, to pass this severe judgment upon herself, in the deep consciousness of her infinite distance from the ultimate point of attainment, and her sometimes apparent contrariety to it. Iniquity felt and iniquity allowed, are, however, essentially different. When allowed, the soul is benumbed and blinded in comparative unconsciousness. When hated, the sensibility of its defilements is so keen, and the apprehensions of its guilt so afflicting, that even in a state of conscious acceptance, the soul is constrained to “write bitter things” against itself. The prostrate humiliating confessions of that holy saint of the Reformation just alluded to, in no degree hindered the peaceful rest of his soul upon the engagements of the faithfulness and love of his God.

We could not indeed but strongly discountenance an assured confidence in a state of open sin, or in any habitually allowed inconsistency with a Christian profession. Yet we are persuaded that a personal assurance has often proved the only chain of love, that has restrained the backslider from total apostasy—from saying, “There is no hope—for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.”¹ Often, too, has it been the appointed means of conviction and recovery from backsliding. A realized sense of a Father’s love, in the tenderness and wisdom of merited chastening, has pierced many a rebellious child with contrite sorrow, and has brought him back to his Father’s feet with simplicity, gratitude, and confidence. While humbled under the most distressing consciousness of backsliding, he is yet encouraged by the remembrance, that the principle and warrant of assurance is not in himself, and that his ground of confidence is unchangeably the same. ‘I see,’ said Miss Graham on one occasion, ‘that God is my God in covenant. He is unchangeable though I continually vary.’

The duty and importance of an elevated enjoyment of scriptural privilege, are delightfully inculcated in the following letter:—

‘What a privilege,’ she observes, (speaking of a blessed saint now in heaven) has Mrs. ——! to be walking so closely with God, and enjoying so much of his presence. “Oh! that I” thus always “knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!” But I never had so little of his presence as now, and if it sometimes returns for a moment, the emotions of my mind seem almost more than I can bear, so that I dread, even while I long for, their recurrence. The true remedy for all this would be, that settled quiet peace, which is the effect of the righteousness of Christ. But this I want faith to lay hold of as my own. I have been surprised lately at the slighting and almost suspicion, with which friends appear to look upon spiritual peace and joy, as if it were

¹ Jer. ii. 25.

rather a snare to be guarded against, than a privilege to be sought after. Yet surely—"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice,"¹—is as much a command as—"Thou shalt not kill—Thou shalt not steal." And I know nothing except this "joy of the Lord," which is said to be "our strength,"² that can so *fill* the heart, as to leave no room for rejoicing in self or in the world. And do you not think, that the more of this holy joy is "shed abroad in the heart," the more godly sorrow will dwell there? At least I find it to be so. They seem to me to be inseparable companions in our experience on earth. Were I to mention the sweetest ingredient in the cup of joy or sorrow (I scarcely know which to call it) that we are permitted to taste here; it would be the melting of the heart, springing from the sense of that immeasurable unworthiness, which gives us some faint conception how low Christ has stooped to save us! Why then, should it be thought presumptuous to desire an abundant measure of the very thing which we are commanded to have? Why should this desire for "this peace of God which passeth all understanding," be construed into a dependence upon frames and feelings?

'Sometimes I think we might have almost as much joy as there is in heaven, if we had but a holy boldness to ask for it, and to receive. We are not straitened in Christ; "but we are straitened in our own bowels;" so that, because joy is an undeserved guest in a heart defiled by sin, we dare not receive it as a lawful guest, though this heart has been cleansed with the blood of Jesus. But what will it be, my dearest friend, to open our eyes upon *that* world, where "perfect love casteth out fear"³ forever? I try to conceive it sometimes, but I cannot. There is nothing I find so difficult, as to imagine entire deliverance from the spirit of bondage. What will it be, to be "face to face" with Christ; "to see him as he is;"⁴ to "see the King in his beauty,"⁵ in "His own glory, in his Father's glory;" *and yet to look upon him without fear!* We had need have these earthly tabernacles taken down first; as they never could sustain it. And yet this is that death, at which even renewed human nature shrinks; though, if we could view it aright, it is but the shutting out of fear, and the letting in of perfect love forever.'

It is indeed to be feared, as Miss Graham has observed, that there is a class of professors among us, who deprecate the glowing exercises of Christian feeling. Their religion is rather of an intellectual, than of a spiritual character. They reason, explain, demonstrate, vindicate. But they are cautious of extremes. They realize the seriousness, importance, and restraints of the Gospel, rather than its high privileges and constraining obligations. The exercise of their judgments, from this defect of a *deep* influence of

¹ Phil. iv. 4. 1 Thess. v. 16.

⁴ Ibid. iii. 2. Rev. xxii. 4.

² Neh. viii. 10.

⁵ Isa. xxxiii. 17.

³ 1 John iv. 18

spiritual religion, materially checks the healthful and animating glow of their affections. Their views of the fundamental doctrines are generally orthodox, and they maintain a correct external deportment. But they appear to have a scanty enjoyment of that new-created taste and element of pleasure, which is connected with the revelation of the glory of God in the soul. They seem to be little conversant with the varied exercises of a devotional habit of mind—such as holy delight in communion with God, lively contemplation of the Saviour, spiritual meditation and enjoyment of the sacred word, and heavenly aspiration of soul. Their ordinary conversation on religion is restrained from that intimate and free communication on spiritual sympathies, which infuses mutual warmth, refreshment, and energy in the endeavor, like Jonathan and David, to “strengthen each other’s hands in God;”¹ to unite in a closer intercourse with our Divine Saviour, and to invigorate our purposes of consecration to his service.

Such persons seem too little to consider the strong and important connection of religion with the affections. But it is only their lively and powerful exercise, that is at all proportioned to the vast expanse and grandeur of the subject. We find, therefore, that religion in heaven, where it exists in its most refined purity and perfection, is much engaged in the delightful affections of joy and love, and in the fervent expressions of these feelings in everlasting praise. The scriptural exhibition of religion also, in the records of the most eminent servants of God, and in the rich display of the promises of Christ, is of the same glowing character.

The religion of the “man after God’s heart” was a religion of the affections. Every natural affection of his soul was filled with God. In his book of Psalms, written with the pen of inspiration for the public use of the church, we behold him—not describing the proper individualities of his own experience; but leading the worship of the universal church in the expression of deep humiliation, holy admiration, fervent love and joy in his God, earnest thirstings and pantings for his presence, delight in his ordinances, devout acknowledgments for his unbounded mercy, and exulting triumph in his faithful love. The book of Canticles also—however we may refrain from a minute consideration of some of its imagery—exhibits those vigorous exercises of spiritual affections, which are consonant to the experience of the lively Christian, and which excite in him no common measure of admiring, trusting, and grateful love to his Divine Saviour. The corresponding New Testament development of our privileges embraces those high and heavenly blessings, which draw out the affections of the soul into exciting employment—such as “peace with God;” constant “access” to his presence and favor; “rejoicing in hope of his glory; glorying in tribulations,” as the pathway thither; “the love of God shed abroad in the heart;” and “the enjoyment of God through our Lord Jesus

¹ 1 Sam. xxiii. 16.

Christ ;" all of which are presented to us in a single view, as our present portion and source of happiness.¹

If, therefore, we acknowledge the Gospel in its faith and obligations, while defectively apprehending and estimating its privileges—if our judgment has been informed and established without a full and habitual exercise of the affections, we stand convicted of an imperfect reception of Christ, and of realizing only a partial interest in his unspeakably rich enjoyments. The class of professors, to whom we more immediately allude, are little aware of the extent of loss to their own souls, or of evil to the church, from their neglect of seating religion more deeply and powerfully in their affections. The spiritual tone of their religion is materially deteriorated. The refreshing influence of the ordinances is weakened. The Holy Comforter is restrained in his intimate communion with their souls. A want of tender sensibility for the most part characterizes their profession. The careless but discerning world mark no perceptible elevation of heavenly character, and are led to think that the promised privileges of the Gospel are a delusive paradise. And professors of their own class gladly take shelter under this lower standard of the cross, as a respectable evangelical religion, precluding them from many inconvenient sacrifices, to which a more decided exhibition of Christian devotedness might have subjected them.

This restraint upon the affections brings us therefore into a lower atmosphere of the Gospel, unvisited with *the full power* of its holy influence. This may readily account for that conformity to the principles, habits, and conversation of the world, which to a considerable extent is connected with an evangelical profession. The enlivening power of faith, *operating through the medium of the affections*, would secure a triumphant victory in every form of worldly conflict,² and enable the disciples now, as in times past, boldly to confess their Master's name,³ to glory in his cross,⁴ and to delight in his service.⁵ But this is the "one thing" that is too often "lacking :" and for which, as a principle of entire consecration to Christ, no substitute can be found.

Let us not, however, while insisting upon the connection of the Gospel with the affections, be supposed to advocate a religion of impulse or sensation. We are aware that excited feelings are no proof of holy affections. Much that passes under the name of religious feeling, is the ebb and flow of the animal emotions, wholly unconnected with a spiritual principle. Those emotions alone are of Divine origin, on which practical holiness is ingrafted ; and which are not sought for the pleasurable excitement of the moment, but as a medium for the exercise of heavenly affections, and for the exhibition of self-denying obedience. We remember also, that the first excitement of a religious feeling is very different from that feeling, as a fixed habit of the mind under the control of a sound judgment. The example of the primitive Christians leads us to combine intelli-

¹ Rom. v. 1—5, 11.

⁴ Gal. vi. 14.

² John v. 4, 5.

⁵ Acts xx. 24; xxii. 13.

³ Acts iv. 19, 20.

gence and energy with feeling, and therefore to suspect the most delightful emotions, which do not bring the steady light from heaven into the daily path, which do not communicate vigor, activity, and decision to the character, and that are not connected with a dedication of the whole man to the service of God. Religion is the dominant practical principle in the soul; and its practical results are the legitimate evidence of the genuineness of the principle. Any encouragement from the past exercise of the affections, *irrespective of their present practical influence*, must therefore be discountenanced: and even this influence satisfactorily ascertained must be controlled by the dictates of a *spiritually enlightened* judgment. We would call the judgment into constant exercise, under the influence of Christian motives. We would regulate "the spirit of love" under the control of "the spirit of a sound mind."¹ We would have "love" always to "abound in knowledge and in all judgment." Only let it "*abound yet more and more.*"² Let it not be chilled, damped, fettered. Let us guard against that frosty elevation of intellect, which seems to regard religion as an Alpine plant, the growth only of a cold climate. Let us not separate it from that exciting glow of love, in which we are quickened to a sense of our obligations, sustained under our daily trials, and are raised in our present privileges and prospective anticipations above the baneful influence of "the course" and spirit "of this world."³

Constitutional causes must, however, be well considered, while insisting upon the strong influence of religion upon the affections. Intellectual character is not always imbued with natural sensibilities; while on the other hand a sympathetic tone of character is easily excited. It is obvious that both these require larger measures of Divine influence—the one, that the man may enter into the delight of Christian feeling—the other, that natural tenderness may be braced up to firmness and stability: in both cases—that they may judge each other charitably. But "*the love of God must be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,*"⁴ or we are not, we cannot be, Christians.

We would beg, however, shortly to advert to a depreciation of

¹ 2 Tim. i. 7.

² Phil. i. 9.

³ Miss Graham's view of scriptural sobriety, as distinguished from lukewarmness and enthusiasm, is most just and discriminating—'I do not mean,' she observes in her manuscript, 'by sobriety, a spirit of temporizing worldly prudence. I speak of that staid considerate frame of mind, which has its source in the full and calm assurance of the understanding—that maturity of judgment, which, without checking the fiery chariot of zeal, directs its course in the high road of consistency. Lukewarmness is, however, far more hateful than enthusiasm. The fault of the heart is more dangerous than the error of the head. Yet are the flights of enthusiasm most hurtful. Instead of displaying the fair countenance of religion, they present us with a distorted caricature of every feature. The world is ready enough to mistake this for her true likeness, and to ridicule her for what is not her own. "The offence of the cross" is already a sufficient stumbling-block in the way of the irreligious. We need not add to it the ill-judged singularity of our own conduct. If we walk closely with God, that will make us singular enough. We shall certainly be regarded as enthusiastic. In this solitary instance, let us not be what we seem. We are especially commanded to "be sober," to "add to our faith knowledge;" and the Spirit, who is our teacher and guide, is "the spirit of a sound mind." (1 Peter i. 13; iv. 7; v. 8. 2 Peter i. 5. 2 Tim. i. 7.)

⁴ Romans v. 5.

scriptural privilege of a very different character. There are some who stand even upon lower ground than intellectual professors. They are satisfied with a small portion of spiritual enjoyment, and even that this modicum should be occasional, not constant. They have no conception of any internal religion answering to the wrestling "violence," by which "the kingdom of heaven is taken by force."¹ The warmth of first impressions subsides as a matter of course; not however into a matured and solid effectiveness, but into lukewarmness and inertion. If they be the children of God in a Laodicean state, they will probably be roused by sharp afflictions, to a zealous and penitent profession of their Master's name, and by this wise and loving dispensation, they will be quickened to hear the voice of their Lord, and introduced into the full enjoyment of communion with him.² It is, however, evident, that every form of the indulgence of sloth, every allowance of unbelief, and the influence of obscure apprehension of the Gospel, operate prejudicially to the interests of the church and of true religion. For thus religion is presented to the world in a false and unattractive garb; the standard of holiness is lowered in the defect of that enlivening sense of redeeming love, which conciliates, engages, and captivates the heart; little is known of that support of the promises of God, which overbalances all difficulties, real and imaginary, and adds more to the enjoyment of life, than suffering can take away. This evil will be generally traced, except in cases of moral delinquency or constitutional weakness, to the secret root of self-righteousness. The simplicity of faith in the contemplation of its great object is obscured by an undue and unevangelical dependence upon evidences. These, though they have their legitimate use as the confirmation of our hope,³ must have no connection with its foundation. When the perception of clear evidence is deficient (as in times of temptation especially is often the case;) faith, leaning upon this ever-changing support, becomes uncertain, unsettled, and unfruitful. Whereas under the darkest destitution of internal sources of comfort, the offer, invitation, encouragement and promise of the Gospel, addressed to sinners, is an unfailing and sufficient warrant, such as nothing in ourselves can make more complete. Let, then, faith be distinctly and explicitly exercised. Let clear apprehensions of the ground of comfort be diligently sought. Let the testimony of the word, not the feelings of our heart, be the foundation of our hope. Let Christ be regarded as the only fountain of life, light, and consolation. Thus will "Grace and peace be multiplied unto us through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."⁴

We close this section with giving at some length, and with interesting variety of illustration, Miss Graham's sentiments upon *Conformity to the World*—a subject of vital moment to the integrity, consistency, and fruitfulness of the Christian profession.

¹ Matt. xi. 12.

³ See the Epistle of St. John. See p. 98.

² See Rev. iii. 19, 20.

⁴ 2 Peter i. 2.

The first letter commences with a few remarks, not immediately relevant to the subject, but which will be read with interest.

'Stoke, Feb. 21, 1827.

' It seems to me that all the Lord's dealings with his redeemed children speak this language—"Cease ye from man."¹ Put not your trust in any earthly comforter. Lean not on any arm but the arm of your Beloved. "For the hearts of the people" of this world "are full of idols." Self is the great idol, that is loved and honored more than God. Then comes a multitude of lesser things, all subservient to this one; and if some little corner in the heart is reserved for God, or if the shadow of a throne is set up, where He may sit on solemn occasions, at the pleasure of the great idol, then they think all is going on well, and God loved as much as he could reasonably expect to be loved by creatures, who have such a press of business on their hands. But, my beloved friend, we may not do so. God, who has purchased us for his own inheritance, will have our whole heart and our whole dependence; and though we must rejoice in the friends He gives us, yet we must not think we cannot do without them; or that we should go on better, if we had more of their help. Christ is all-sufficient, and teaches, comforts, and reproves in His own time and way, and by His own means, without any need of our direction. In looking back to every event of my life, since I have known something of the grace of God, I find that there never has been anything on which I very much depended, but God has straightway removed or imbibited that thing, or in some way made it useless to me, till I returned to place my whole dependence on Him. But let us not accuse our dearest Lord of acting unkindly towards us in sending these disappointments; for he only takes away other helps and props, to make room for himself. He loves us too well to suffer any rival in our affections.

' I have read your dear letter over and over, and scarcely know how to answer it, or what to make of it. Oh that you had some better counsellor than I! for I know not how to advise you. I fear lest you should think me strict and gloomy, if I tell you all I think; but I will tell you, since you desire it; and I know that God is both able and willing to give you joys so much superior to every worldly amusement, that you will wonder you could ever think them worth a thought. I must say then, that the world and worldly amusements, appear to me quite inconsistent with the character of a real Christian; and that we never can enjoy happy converse with God till we give them up. The Christian is described in the Scriptures, as "the temple of the living God."² Now where the holy God takes up his abode, surely that heart must be sanctified and set apart from every common use, and wholly devoted to his service. But can God and the world reign in the same heart, or as it were reign by turns? Shall we admit the Lord of glory in the morning, and shut Him out in the evening, while we are going to a ball or a play?

¹ Isaiah ii. 22.

² 2 Cor. vi. 16.

for we may be well assured, He will not go with us there. The spirit of the world, which reigns in such places, is quite opposite to His Spirit; and "the friendship of the world," which is there sought, "is enmity with God."¹ I know this would be called uncharitable; but I do not wish to be more charitable than the Bible. And surely experience proves it to be true; for, go into any fashionable assembly whatever, and there begin to speak of those things of which we ought to talk, "when we are sitting in the house, and when we walk by the way, and when we lie down, and when we rise up;"² and see if politeness itself can suppress a smile at your strange and unwarrantable impertinence, in forcing the attention of the company to subjects, which they are met for the very purpose of forgetting. No, my dear friend, that cannot be a proper place for a Christian, where religion is the thing that must not be named; and where even something in our hearts will tell us, that such subjects are out of place. Neither can you say—your own heart may be as well employed there as elsewhere; for the most delightful meditation on heavenly things (if we could thus meditate in the midst of vanity) would be spoiled by the thought, that there were none who enjoyed like communion with ourselves; we should soon have to "seek, with Joseph, a place to weep in,"³ to weep over our companions and friends, who are thus "feeding on ashes," delighting themselves in things which cannot profit. The fact is, when Christians are at a place of worldly amusement (if Christians are to be found, who will venture themselves so unguardedly into Satan's strong places,) they must either have heavenly thoughts, (and then the amusement would appear so vapid, disgusting, and uninteresting, that they would never be able to stay it out;) or else, if the amusement is an amusement to them, it fills their hearts with a crowd of vain thoughts, shuts out Christ, and lets in self and the world, and so prepares room for doubts, and fears, and much bitter repentance, before the Spirit will again shine upon a heart, which has so wantonly despised His grace. But many will say—"All this may take place if we stay at home; our worldly hearts may let in many intruders there; and we may be compelled to own, that we should have been as well at any place of public resort, as in our own room, with no one to talk to but our own heart.' This, I confess, is our shame and misery—that we are so often entangled in vain and worldly thoughts. But surely it does but make the argument stronger against indulging in anything which tends to foment such thoughts. If we are so weak, why go into temptation, against which the strongest have not been able to stand? We may fall into a worldly frame of mind in the absence of any worldly pleasures; but, because we have got a cruel enemy within, shall we go and expose ourselves to the attacks of the enemy from without? Let us at least have the comfort of not having gone in quest of our misery. Temptations enough will come to us; let us not go to them. Besides, it seems to me but mocking "our Father which is

¹ James iv. 4.² Deut. vi. 7.³ Genesis xliii. 30.

in heaven"—to say, one hour—"Lead us not into temptation"¹—when we have coolly made up our mind to rush into it the next. From the evil of such a temptation, can we hope that he will deliver us? Let me draw your attention to the important precept of our Lord—"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately!"² Now, dear —, I am sure you would not choose, that your Lord should come for you, while engaged in worldly amusements; nor would you feel, that he found you watching; nor would you be ready to "open immediately," but would rather ask time to collect your scattered thoughts, and trim your wasted lamp. If we were to ask the blessed in heaven, or the tormented in hell, what they think of such employments, would not the one smile with pity at the question, and the other exclaim with rage—"Oh that I had but one of those hours you are thus throwing away! You should see whether I would let the precious moments pass in such vanities as these.' Forgive me, if I have said too much. Indeed I should tremble for you, going into such a difficult situation, if I did not know, that God can take as much care of you there, as in a more retired place.

'I do earnestly desire, that the blessing of a single eye and undivided heart may be yours. There is no comfort in being an undecided Christian; and Christ himself has declared that such a character is hateful to him.³ But this will not be the case with you: He who has helped you thus far, will go on leading you by the hand, till He has brought you to glory. You ask me, 'How are we to wean our hearts from the world?' I know no other answer but that which the Scripture gives.⁴ A believing view of Jesus must make the world look dark and insignificant: and whenever we begin to love it too much, we have only to apply to Him, who has said to us, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world;"⁵ and His mighty power shall be put forth to enable us to overcome it also. I used to make many resolutions against a worldly spirit, and try many ways to break myself to it; and these resolutions were repeatedly broken; but now I have but one way; I try to take my heart to Jesus, believing that the victory is already mine for His sake. 'Lord, thou hast promised, that "sin shall not have dominion over me."⁶ Thou hast said, that every one that is "born of thee overcometh the world." Fulfil thy gracious promise, and make me "more than conqueror" in thy might! Thou hast "given thyself for my sins, that thou mightest deliver me from this present world;"⁷ and wilt thou now leave me to be taken captive by this evil world? O dear —, the faithful God must become like unto lying, promise-breaking man, before He can refuse to help his servants, who thus cast themselves on His word of promise; and disclaim all wisdom, strength, and goodness but His. The world and

¹ Matthew vi. 13.

² Luke xii. 35—37.

³ Rev. iii. 15, 16.

⁴ 1 John iv. 4; v. 4, 5.

⁵ John xvi. 33.

⁶ Romans vi. 14.

⁷ Galatians i. 4.

the things of the world, as "a strong man armed, who keepeth his goods in peace," must continue to have possession of our hearts, till Christ, who is "stronger than" the world, breaks in, and claims the house of the strong man, as a mansion for His Spirit to dwell in.¹ Cast yourself, then, without fear upon the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus. The more worldly and wicked you feel yourself to be, the more He is concerned to show His power and faithfulness in saving you from your worldliness and wickedness.²

The next letter upon the same subject was written shortly afterwards, to another correspondent, whom she regarded with the most lively affection, as having been made instrumental in communicating to her soul the knowledge and love of her Saviour.

'March 22, 1827.

'You must, I think, have misunderstood my meaning about worldly company and amusements. Let us but have a right motive for doing so; and I think we may safely go into any company whatever. The word of God affords us two valuable rules for all our actions, and if we could set them always before our eyes, I believe we should seldom be at a loss as to the conduct we ought to pursue: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." And—whatever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.'³ Let us then always ask ourselves, before we set about any study, or employment, or enter into any company—"Am I doing this "to the glory of God?" Is it my sole, or at least my principal motive? Can I "do it in the name of the Lord Jesus?" Can I boldly say—it is such an action as he would approve of? And can I look up to Him all the time I am doing it, for his sanction and blessing? If you can answer this question satisfactorily, the action, whatever it be, *must* be right; and there can be no danger attending the performance of it. If, on the contrary, your mind recoils from even asking such a question, be assured that there is something wrong in it, and that you would do well to give it up. It is a hard lesson to our carnal hearts, but one which the love of Jesus can make easy to us; that from the moment we take refuge at the cross of Jesus, and are "washed from our sins in his blood"—from that happy moment we are "no longer our own," and must make it our one business to "glorify God in our body and spirit, which are God's."⁴ This seems to me the great and marked distinction between the Christian and the worldling. The one lives to himself; the other "to Him who died for him and rose again."⁵ The one consults his own pleasure, ease, and safety, "leans to his own understanding," and seeks his own glory. The other prays, that his will may be quite swallowed up in the will of Jesus; "ceases from his own wisdom," and makes "Christ his wisdom." He no longer "receives the

¹ Luke xi. 21, 22.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

² 1 Cor. x. 31. Colossians iii. 17.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

honor which cometh of men ;" but desires that Christ, the Author of all his good things, may have all the glory of them. His fleshly nature, or—as St. Paul calls it, the old man, strives hard against this, and would lead him to please and honor himself again ; and this is the great conflict between the flesh and the spirit, which makes the Christian life so truly called a warfare. This conflict has already begun in you, my dearest friend, and will never cease till death takes you from sense and self, to where you shall see Jesus as he is, and wonder that you could ever prefer anything to Him. No wonder you find it a hard and strange conflict. Parting with self-seeking, self-honoring, and self-righteousness, is far more painful than cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. "With man, indeed, this is impossible ; but with" Jesus "all things are possible." Taking this consideration with us, then, that Christ—not self—is to be the end of all our actions, and that "whether we eat or drink," or speak, go in or out, or are alone or in company, engaged in study or recreation, we must "do all to the glory of God," and "in the name of the Lord Jesus"—I think it will give us a very different view of our duty as to worldly company and employments, from any that worldly wisdom or policy can give us.

It cannot be, however, for the glory of God, that we should show ourselves morose and unsociable. The friends and relations we have are His gifts, and therefore must not be despised or neglected. Besides, we ought to bear in mind, that the redeemed of Christ are "the salt of the earth." "a peculiar people," created anew in Christ Jesus for the very purpose of "showing forth his praises:"¹ and how can we do this, if we shut ourselves out altogether from the world ? It is false humility, which makes us say, 'I can never do any good'—for the meaner the instrument, the more is the glory of God displayed in doing good with it ; and as it is all God's doing and not ours, we have no reason to be proud of it, but rather to be abased at the sight of our own unfitness. I own to you, that I consider it the greatest blessing to a worldly family to have even one Christian among them (though I know they think it a sad interruption) : for who can tell, but God may hear the prayers and tears of that one, and make him or her the messenger of peace to the rest ? Thus far, then, I think it must be right to go into worldly company, in the discharge of relative duties *not plainly inconsistent with the word of God* ; or to avail ourselves of any providential opportunities of Christian usefulness. Let us, however, be careful, that our own spiritual state is not affected by it ; for we can never be required to enter into any things to the hurt of our own souls. But on the other hand, my dear friend, I think, if we really love Christ, this occasional mixing with worldly company will be rather a sacrifice than a pleasure to us. For think what it is to go amongst worldly people "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and "to the glory of our God." Even if we do not feel ourselves called on to speak to them directly on the subject ; still if we keep this aim in view,

¹ Matt. v. 13. Eph. ii. 10. 1 Peter ii. 9.

in how many little things must we show that our sentiments are opposite to theirs ! And if they know that we profess religion, we may be almost sure that they view us with secret dislike and contempt ; for "the carnal heart is" and always will be "enmity against God" and his people. I have seldom been into worldly company, without feeling either very uncomfortable all the time I was in it, or very unhappy as soon as I came out of it ; for if God enabled me to keep his glory in view, the sight of so many souls perishing in a vain confidence of their own safety ; the sense of my inability to speak properly to them ; the consciousness that in many cases at least they would gladly have dispensed with my company, all these things could not but make me uncomfortable—not unhappy ; because, *supposing that I was in the clear path of duty* —in the midst of vain company and sad reflections, I could still hold communion with Jesus. But when I lost sight of this great end, O dear —, I wish I could point to you the anguish I have endured, that you might avoid dishonoring your Saviour as I have done ! Very, very often this has been my wretched case :—' What will people think of me, if I set up to be so much better than others ?' This ensnaring question has often made me put on a levity of sentiment and manner, which I did not at first feel, but which, persisted in, has become real ; and I have been in heart as well as in appearance, the worldliest of the worldly. And even when I have returned home, God has often seen fit to visit this sin, by leaving me still to backslide in heart, and to be "filled with my own ways;"¹ and when I have come to myself, (for he has never *quite* left me, nor ever will) how can I describe the bitterness of thinking, that I had done dishonor to the cause of my Only Friend, lost the heavenly sense of His redeeming love, missed many opportunities of saying a word which he might have blessed, and by my light and foolish conduct given occasion to the world to think, that religion was a thing in word only, not in power !

'I have told you my experience ; but I believe it is more or less what every Christian feels ; only few have been so very guilty in this respect as I have. Even now, though I know, that all these sins are washed away in my Redeemer's blood, I cannot reflect without the deepest self-abhorrence on the vain and foolish conduct I often indulged in at —, particularly the sin of evil speaking, which I gave way to there more than anywhere. I might add, that of sabbath-breaking. Do not think that I mean to lay it to their charge ; oh ! no ; I only mean, that by going into the society of worldly people, if I may so say, without my armor on, I became as vain as they, and much more sinful ; because I sinned against light and grace. Surely, then, if we consider these drawbacks, worldly people will not be our chosen companions ; and we shall go among them, when we do, as a duty rather than a pleasure.'

'With regard to the theatre, and amusements of this kind, Chris-

¹ Prov. xiv. 14.

tians must have little to do, if they can find time for them. But if they could find time, I confess I am at a loss to see what pleasure they can find there. Are not the sentiments usually uttered in such places quite in opposition to the precepts of God's word? Are not pride, vain-glory, self-destruction, hatred, dissipation, unlawful attachments, held up to our admiration in many theatrical compositions, considered as trivial faults in most of them, and detested upon right principles in none? You profess, as a Christian, to make Jesus your happiness. What can you find here to bring you into communion with him? You profess to make his glory your aim? Can you then sit with complacency, and hear a company of your fellow-creatures with immortal souls, uttering sentiments which only tend to make them despise Christ and his ways? But I will leave the subject, dear —, only adding, that I do not wish you to give up this amusement from what I say, but from the settled conviction of your own mind, after prayer for Divine teaching. If then you find, that you can neither "do it to the glory of God, or in the name of Jesus," I will not try to dissuade you from it. I was once induced to attend 'Matthews at Home,' and shall never forget the sensation I felt, when he told us how his father, who was a good kind of man, but *too religious*, had tried to keep him from coming on the stage. When I looked round, and saw the merriment expressed in every face, I could not help saying to myself—'This is no place for me; there are no lovers of Christ here; for "charity rejoiceth not in iniquity,"'¹ as these poor deluded people are doing.'

'And now, my dearest friend, I have proposed many privations to you; and what have I to offer you in return? Nothing but the love of Jesus; nay, this is yours already; for if you are enabled to give these things up, it will be—not that he may love you, but because he has loved you. The blessed spirits above want nothing else to make them happy, and we soon hope to taste their happiness; but if it cannot make us happy here, then heaven itself would not make us happy. Oh let us pray for this love! Let us cast off the spirit of bondage, and not come to God, as slaves, *who must serve him*; but as his redeemed children, *who love to serve him*, and who find his "service perfect freedom." Let us pray that more of "the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts." Let us beseech the Holy Ghost to "take of the things of Jesus, and show them to us." Let us study all the sweet relations in which he has revealed himself to us in the Scriptures—Father, brother, friend, husband, lover. Here is a perpetual and rational study for us; and the more we follow it, the sweeter we shall find it. It is but a little ray of this love that as yet has warmed my heart; yet I can tell you, dearest and most beloved friend, that it is worth renouncing ten thousand worlds for. The Lord Jesus has sometimes drawn near to me with such unspeakable sweetness, that I have thought all the lovely relations of life,—father, husband, friend,—

¹ 1 Corinthians xiii. 6.

had no beauty in them, except as they served to shadow forth the immense love of our reconciled God in Him, and the near and intimate communion, to which he admits his chosen and redeemed people. O my friend, he has chosen you! What a wonder of love is here! He has redeemed you, at the price of his own precious blood, "from this evil world."¹ Will you linger in it any longer? God forbid! May the Spirit of God "fill you with such peace and joy in believing," as may make the world and the things of it appear to you in their true light! Remember, this is not your home. "We are strangers and pilgrims" here. Let not the world see, that the joys of the love of Christ, and communion with him, are not enough to occupy us, without having recourse to the many vain and trifling ways they have invented of killing time, and driving eternity out of their thoughts. If we want strength, there is fulness of strength and grace treasured up for us in Jesus: and we have only to seek it by earnest prayer. I wish you would pray for more experience of his love to you. This would convince you, more than all the arguments in the world, of the vanity of everything, which can tend to divert your mind from him. In seeking his love you may be able to say with Jacob—"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"²—I shall look for your next very anxiously. Do not let these words, 'affected,' 'precise,' 'hypocrite,' 'enthusiast,' 'fool,' 'madman,' and many other epithets, which perhaps you will hear lavished upon the followers of the Lamb, discourage you from making his cause and people your own. I cannot but remind you—that "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution."³ Not perhaps open persecution now, but ridicule, dislike, sneering, either open or secret, must be your lot, if you determine to "be not conformed to this world." We must not think it hard, or be angry or disheartened, if these things come upon us; for our Master was a scorn and a derision to all around him.

'Do not cease to love me, and think of me always, dearest —, as yours most affectionately and entirely attached.'

P. S. 'I earnestly join in your wish, that this may be the commencement of a new and blessed period of your life. May every future year see us walking more closely and more humbly with God.'

In a third letter to her cousin, about a month subsequent, she again reverts to her Scriptural Rules.

‘April, 20, 1827.

'I feel exceedingly at a loss, my dear friend, how to answer your interesting question—'What is the meaning of giving up the world?' For I do not consider, that giving up the world consists in renouncing its amusements, its company, its pursuits, so much as in putting off its temper and spirit, that we may put on the spirit

¹ Galatians i. 4.

² Genesis xxxii. 26.

³ 2 Timothy iii. 12.

and temper that was in Christ Jesus. When the spirit of the world is thus exchanged for the Spirit of Christ, the amusements and gayeties of the world must (not perhaps all at once, but gradually and surely) come to be extremely vain and unsatisfying in our opinion. For though the word "communion with God" is considered as the mere creation of an enthusiastic imagination, yet if we will allow the Scriptures to be true, we must allow that there is such a thing as "holding fellowship with the Father and the Son," as "walking with God" day by day "in perfect peace," as "having Christ living in us," and "his Holy Spirit abiding in us;"¹ for by this, and by this only can we know that we are in Christ, even by his Spirit which abideth in us. Now let us suppose a person enjoying—not the flights of a false and self-seeking devotion—but real, sober, scriptural converse with God, and that daily; must not this be a happiness superior to any the world can give? See what David thought of it—"As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: Thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee."² &c. &c. And so in a thousand songs of love has David left on record what he thought of "communion with God." What must have been Job's view of the subject, when he said—"My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments!"³—Isaiah's—when he said, "O Lord, the desire of our soul is unto thy name, and to the remembrance of thee! With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early!"⁴ But I need not multiply proofs of what seems to need no proofs—that communion with his Creator is the best, and noblest, and happiest thing of which a creature is capable. Then will not they who enjoy this communion, very carefully avoid whatever may tend to rob them of it? They will soon find that converse with the world (*unless as far as duty or necessity lead them into it*) is not compatible with converse with God: for if they conform to this world's habits and opinions, they deprive themselves of all scriptural claim to hope that God dwells in them, and they in Him. But if on the contrary, they are "transformed in the spirit of their minds," they will soon find that the world will dislike or ridicule them. But until we are delivered from the spirit of the world, I cannot see how we can reasonably be expected to

¹ 1 John i. 3. Gen. v. 24. Isaiah xxvi. 3. Gal. ii. 20. 1 John ii. 24.

² Psalm xlii. 1, 2; lxxi. 4. P. T.; lxxiii. 25; cxix. 20; lxii. 7; lxiii. 5, 6.

³ Job xvi. 20; xxiii. 3, 4.

⁴ Isaiah xxvi. 8, 9.

see any harm whatever in the customs of the world. Let the world that dwells and rules within be deposed, and the world without will soon lose its undue influence over us. But dearest ——, let us “stick to”¹ the Scriptures as our rule and standard in everything, (thus our doubts upon every subject will be quickly satisfied); and let us study them with prayer, that he, “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would shine into our dark hearts, to give them the knowledge of the glory” of the Gospel of God. We shall not ask in vain; for “God giveth wisdom liberally, and without upbraiding.” May he give you that “wisdom which is from above;” since not all the wisdom of this world can find out God. There are in the sacred word two rules, which, if kept in view, might be a lamp to guide our feet in the darkest and most perplexing moments—“Whether ye eat, or drink, or *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” “*Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*”² Now in going to a ball, or a play, merely to indulge my own vanity, or gratify my own inclination, I could not say—I am “doing this to the glory of God;” I could not set about it “in the name of the Lord Jesus;” therefore as a Christian, I think I have no right to do it at all. But if any one could go “to the glory of God,” I cannot dispute their right of going. In visiting my friends and spending a little intercourse in social converse with them, I have no feeling of this kind to draw me back, for God has given us our friends, and therefore requires us to be active in every social duty; and religion has done little for us, if it has taught us to be morose and unsociable; for the very soul of religion is to live not to ourselves, but to others. Still I think that, as far as we can, we should choose our friends rather among the friends of God, than among the friends and followers of the world. You mention music;—so far from thinking it wrong in all cases, I think in my own, it is absolutely a religious duty to pursue music, as far as my health will permit; and I think the same with regard to you. But supposing we had no particular object in studying it, still I think that music, as affording a pleasing and innocent source of amusement to ourselves and others, cannot be considered wrong, though I should think it wrong to give more than a very moderate time to it, or to let it encroach upon any other duty. For a real Christian—to say the least of it—has so great a work in hand; so many really important and interesting objects daily solicit his attention, excite his energies, and set every faculty of soul and body to work; that he or she can have very little time to throw away upon mere amusements. I have given you my opinion as well as I can, because you asked me, not because I wish or expect you to be guided by it: for I am persuaded, that if you continue searching the Bible with earnest prayer, God himself will lead you into every good and pleasant way. I have known many religious people, who have not seen

¹ See Psalm cxix. 31.

² 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. iii. 17.

the necessity of separating themselves entirely from the world at first; but I never knew any one who did not see it at last. Let me then close this subject, dearest —, by calling to your remembrance that encouraging invitation in Corinthians: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”¹

These letters will, we think, be admitted to discuss this important subject with much Christian wisdom and spirituality. Here are no harsh or sweeping denunciations, but a plain reference to the rules of Christ; to the general principles, taste, and spirit of the Gospel; and to the test of conscience and experience. Two particulars are worthy of special remarks—*her principle, and her rules.*

Her principle is the superior attractiveness of the Gospel, as the only effectual opposition to a worldly spirit—‘A believing view of Christ’—as she justly observed—‘must make the world look dark and insignificant.’² The merchantman would never have suffered his “goodly pearls” to be snatched from him; but the first sight of “the pearl of great price” was sufficient inducement to him gladly to relinquish them.³ The apostle would never have yielded up his good name in the church with all his other sources of gain to the persuasive power of argument. But “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord” once manifested to his soul, made what before was his all, now “loss”—yea—“dung” in his sight.⁴ Thus in every case, simple faith is the principle of Christian decision.

It is often a ground of self-delusive complaint—“If we were less entangled with the world, we should reach to far higher attainments in the excellency of this heavenly knowledge.” This is doubtless a truth. Yet the converse is perhaps the most accurate and important statement. *It is because we know so little of Christ that we are so much entangled with the world.* Here we have the radical principle of the evil laid open. General and superficial views of our glorious Saviour offer but a feeble resistance to the mighty, subtle, and incessant operation of a worldly spirit. Deep, self-abasing, and spiritual apprehensions of the Gospel must be perseveringly sought for, and maintained in constant exercise under Divine teaching and grace. To the heart thus attracted to Christ by the active contemplation of faith—the world in its most alluring forms will ever be a crucified object, an object of shame and revulsion.⁵ And if this heavenly contemplation be followed out in all his relations to us of infinite tenderness and love, how will it cover us with shame, that a moment should ever have been found for any other object of *paramount* desire, affection, and interest! We must, however, carry this powerful principle of faith into all the particulars of practical application. We must not forget the supreme authority of the scriptural commands for nonconformity to the world;⁶ nor

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

² Page 427.

³ Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

⁴ Phil. iii. 7, 8.

⁵ Compare 1 John v. 4, 5. Gal. vi. 14. ⁶ Such as Rom. xii. 2. 2 Cor. vi. 17. 1 John ii. 15.

must we refrain from rebuking whatever appears to us in detail to be inconsistent with these commands. But except our remonstrances are grounded upon the full and clear principles of the Gospel, we shall—instead of “laying the axe to the root of the tree”—only prune the branches for more luxuriant fruitfulness. The worldly taste may be restrained—but not subjugated; and the heart, if it be even partially drawn from the world, will be turned to self-righteousness, not to Christ.

As to Miss Graham's rules, it is a vain attempt to fix precise limits to every particular act. Yet the scriptural rules which she has adduced, may be brought to bear upon every difficulty; and if the application of them will not make us infallibly right, it will at least preserve us from being materially wrong. The force of relative obligation as an ordinance of God, is in clear conformity with these rules, and as such is strongly inculcated by Miss Graham;¹ while at the same time it is always connected with faithfulness and decision of conduct, and never made an excuse for overstepping the line of demarcation. The point of worldly conformity commences, and the habit of it is strengthened, in the neglect of Christian simplicity of profession. Either these rules are not spiritually apprehended, or they are not conscientiously regarded, or there is a want of intelligent capacity to apply them. Many young inquirers, of unformed habits and unexercised profession, have lost their slight impressions of religion in an unguarded association with the world. And how many more established professors have, by unspiritual habits, become unconsciously conformed to the taste, maxims, or society of the world, even while they have “escaped its” external “pollutions.” We would earnestly recommend the application of these rules to every step and point of contact with the world. Let them be the test for the daily “trial of our spirit.” Let us cultivate that tender susceptibility of conscience, which impressed this devoted child of God with poignant sorrow and humiliation, in a single instance of overstepping the boundary, or neglecting the rule of her known duty.² We are persuaded that this habit of mind diligently cherished would issue in the conviction, that the points of necessary or hopeful intercourse with the world, are not so frequent as were imagined; that the rational pleasure of its society ill compensates for the painful loss that is felt in the secret retirement; that positive evil belongs to unnecessary communication with it: and that increasing circumspection is needed even in the path of duty. The responsibility of maintaining our profession will be more deeply felt; and a path of retreat sought for, where that profession seems to be impracticable. We shall walk not by expediency, but by scriptural rule. Self-indulgence will yield to the dictates of conscience, and double-mindedness to the simplicity of the Gospel. “The eye being thus single, the whole body will be full of light.”³ Religion will assume a different caste. It will be marked by a holy and heavenly

¹ See p. 129.

² See pp. 130.

³ Matt. vi. 22.

stamp. It will be—not a system of restraints—but a religion of privilege—the strictness of its rules wholly divested of moroseness, and forming an effectual safeguard of its consistency and fruitfulness. Thus God will be seen in his true character, as “having pleasure in the prosperity of his servant,”¹ who needs not to be beholden to the world for that happiness, which it promises to its votaries in substance, but gives only in shadow and delusion.

The length and seriousness of this important discussion may be happily relieved by a sprightly effort of Miss Graham’s imagination bearing immediately upon our subject. It was written impromptu in her friend’s manuscript book. The picture was probably suggested by her residence on the sea-side.

‘February, 1830.

“*Thy people shall be my people.*” Ruth i. 16. I have sometimes thought, that the Christian, who willingly casts his lot among those to whom the doctrine of the cross is foolishness, and sits down in the world as if he were of the world, is like the foolish little bird, that should build its nest in the mast of some tall ship. At first it seems a place of security and peace; but soon the vessel looses from its anchor, and the little songster is borne away it knows not whither. The trees and flowery hedges, and bright sunny meadows, are fast going out of sight. Fain would the poor bird spread its wings and regain them; but how can it leave its nestlings, its treasures, which it has confided to that strange and troubled dwelling! No, no; its all is launched into the deep; and with anxious, constant care it must hover round the dear nest, and seek for strange and scanty food for its young. And at first the vessel may glide smoothly on, while the wind gently plays with its sails, and the sun lights them up to a snowy whiteness, and the gilded waves break in sparkles round the stately prow. Then the little visitant pours forth its sweet song, and gladdens the sailor’s heart by the fond tale it tells him of happiness and home. Yet all the while it is only lamenting its desolation, and pining after the pleasant haunts in the green wood, and the dear companions, by whom its notes were answered from bush to bush, till the very boughs waved in joy to their merry strains. But oh! poor bird, if a storm arise, how wilt thou flutter round thy nestlings, and tremble, lest they should be swept away by the pitiless waves, or chilled into death by the piercing winds! Yes, little trembler, thou hast placed thyself and thine offspring in a perilous situation; nor is it thou that canst save them, but thy Father and ours, without whom not so much as a sparrow falleth to the ground. He it was that took care of thee, when thou wast safely lodged in thine own leafy branches; and he can take care of thee now; can teach the rude sailor to respect thy helplessness, and hush the stormy winds, that they ruffle not a feather of thy wing. And thus, Christian, if thou hast wilfully

¹ Psalm xxxv. 27.

withdrawn thyself from the shadow of that tree, which spreads forth its branches for all the fowls of heaven to dwell in ; if thou hast made thee a home away from the Lord's people ; many a bitter hour of loneliness and desolation shalt thou have, while thou art "singing the Lord's song in a strange land." Thou shalt rue thy folly, and be humbled for it. Yet be not utterly cast down, but still trust in thy God, who will not fail to rebuke and chasten, but will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

IV.—HER SENTIMENTS UPON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.

WE now conclude this long series of quotation, with some extracts of a more miscellaneous character.

It is delightful to observe all her views of science—extensive and accurate as they were—to have been admitted and enjoyed through a heavenly medium. Whichever way she looked in this wide expanse, her eye was transfixed in the contemplation of the unsearchable mysteries of redeeming love. We may instance the following sketch of Christian Astronomy—extracted from her manuscript. Speaking of the withering influence of Mathematics upon the pleasures of the imagination—and having (as we have already seen¹) suggested the study of classical literature, as furnishing some antidote for this evil—she further adds on this point :

'It is scarcely possible to pursue mathematics to any extent, without being led by them into some of those sciences, of which they form the vestibule. *Astronomy*—for instance—presents a field for the largest and noblest exercises of the imagination. The stars—'the poetry of heaven'—afford not only perpetual employment for the reason, but unbounded scope to the fancy. The objects of astronomical study display a sublimity which exalts the imagination; a mystery which humbles the intellect; a wisdom which enlarges every faculty of the soul, and a loveliness which soothes every feeling of the heart. They have, like their Divine Author—"heights, depths, and breadths"—unfathomable—inscrutable. Here we may soar, as upon the wings of angelic intelligence. Here we may expatiate, till our minds are lost in infinity. But with what unutterable astonishment does the Christian astronomer gaze upon the innumerable host ! He is conscious that God is all around him. His mind is possessed by one idea—the presence, the immense, the all-pervading presence of the God who made and upholds all these. For an instant he forgets his own littleness, and becomes vast as the objects of his contemplation; for there are moments when the human soul seems to expand into something of its original grandeur. But the humbling consciousness returns, as soon as his full heart will give him leave to think, and he shrinks into insignificance. It is nothing to be the least, the meanest of the creatures of God. But to be a fallen creature—this bows him to the dust. Sin has made

¹ Page 39.

him an outcast from the beautiful creation, an alien from the creating God. A holy God is on every side: and he is not holy.

'But yet his thrilling awe is cheered with joy, hope and love. "The day-star arises in his heart;"¹ and now every other star has a voice, "a still small voice;" and tells a tale of love, which the angels delight to hear—a mystery, "which the angels desire to look into."²

'He who made us is "the God of thy salvation." He is "thy beloved and thy Friend." Thus hath the God who made the heavens, who ordained the moon and the stars, been mindful of man, visited him in his low estate, and "crowned him with glory and honor."³ "Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light; praise him, ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens."⁴

'Christians! you can "sing praises with understanding."⁵ All ye that love the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. "Praise the Lord, O my soul."⁶

While this sublime science has been perverted (as in the French school of philosophy) for man's contemptuous rejection of his Maker, it is most refreshing to observe the magnificent illustrations, by which the "heavens," viewed through the medium of Christian philosophy, "declare the glory of God."⁷ In this field of elevated contemplation, the eye of faith "leads us up from nature," not only to "nature's God," but to the Christian's God—the God of his salvation. Here we discover what the "eye" of reason "has not seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man,"⁸ untaught by God. If—as our poet of the Night has decided—"an undevout astronomer is mad," even the *devout man of science* is not in the full possession of his faculties, nor in the enjoyment of the clear perception of the objects of his delighted observation, except he has been instructed in the highest school of Divine science, and enabled to trace in the Maker of the starry frame his God and Saviour—his faithful, unchangeable, Almighty friend.

We pass to another field of science, of more general interest. Miss Graham's Musical Tract, already referred to,⁹ will, it is believed, be found to give an accurate sketch of the principles of its own department of the science. Its style is buoyant with life, beauty, and power. It occasionally mounts almost to the magnificent prose of John Milton or Jeremy Taylor. Take the following as a specimen.

Speaking to her young pupil of the importance of practising, she sends her to the woods and groves for a stimulating example of industry.

'I can tell you, that the little musicians of the grove do not attain their wild and delicate modulations without practice. When I lay

¹ 2 Peter i. 19.

² 1 Peter i. 12.

³ Psalm viii. 4, 5.

⁴ Psalm cxlviii. 3, 4.

⁵ Ib. xlvi. 7.

⁶ Ib. ciii. 22.

⁷ Psalm xix. 1.

⁸ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

⁹ See page 41.

in bed last summer, unable to speak or move for many hours in the day, the songs of the birds furnished me with an inexhaustible source of amusing observation. I could not but feel grateful to the melodious little creatures, who beguiled me of half my pain, and made the weary hours of sickness fly away upon wings as light as their own. As if led by an instinctive sympathy, numbers of blackbirds and thrushes came to build their nests round our garden; and the woodpigeons, which had been silent the year before, renewed their soft notes in the high trees by the parsonage-lawn. However, they were shy, and I thought myself fortunate, if once or twice in the day, their gentle cooing found its way to my ear. But there was one thrush, whose notes I soon learned to distinguish from all the other thrushes; indeed his skill seemed to exceed theirs, as much as Cordoba's¹ exceeds yours or mine. Every morning I listened for his voice, which was sure to precede the matins of all the other birds. In the day-time, his brilliant tones were mingled and almost lost in the general melody; but as soon as the sun was preparing to set, when the blackbirds had either sung themselves to sleep, or were flown off to keep up their festivities elsewhere, then was my thrush's practising time. He was kind enough to select a tree not far from my window, while the other thrushes placed themselves at a respectful distance, and edged in a note here and there as they could. He opened the rehearsal with a number of wild trills and calls, which I could not well understand; only they were very sweet and cheering to me; and he would pause between each, till a soft response was heard from some distant bough. But when he had fixed upon a little cadence which pleased him, it became a more serious business. Strange to say, I could always tell when this would be; for what pleased me particularly was sure to please him; so true it is that nature has given the same perception of melody to man and to birds. He would chant it over in a low tone two or three times, as if to make himself sure of it; then he caroled it out with triumphant glee; then stopped short on a sudden, as much as to say to his rivals—"Which of you can imitate my strains?" Their notes sounded most sweet at various distances during these little intervals; but they seemed conscious of their inferiority to my favorite, who would suddenly break out into the very same melody, upon which he had doubtless been musing all the while, enriching it by some little note or trill, the wildest and most touching that ever came into a thrush's heart. I needed neither concert nor music-master, while I could listen to the untaught, but not unpremeditated, harmony of this original professor: nor could I quarrel with the sickness, which had been the means of developing another link in that mysterious chain, which binds me to the rest of creation, by opening my ear and my heart more than ever to the language of universal nature. But I often wished to have you with me, that you might hear how much pains

¹ An eminent musical professor among the Spanish Refugees, to whom she was indebted for much valuable instruction.

the birds are at to charm us with their warbling. It is pretty also to hear the young birds commence their small and faltering strains, which grow clearer and louder, till they are no longer distinguished from the rest. True, it is their profession, and we have many things to think of; but what time we do give to the study of music, we should give it with all our hearts, as they do.¹

For effective playing she gives the following sensible rules, interspersing them with her own happy illustrations.

'I have told you that to play a piece effectively, you must comprehend it well. You must also *feel* it deeply. It is impossible to excite lively emotions in another's breast, while your own remains untouched. There are two rules, which may assist you to attain quick perceptions of what is correct and beautiful; and (with the help of the mechanical rules I have given you) to bring those perceptions out in your own performance. *The first is, to cultivate a constant habit of listening to natural sounds.* Everything in nature has a melody which goes to the heart, and from which we may gain some new and delightful ideas. I have called your attention to the song of birds. Then there is the bleating of flocks, and the lowing of distant herds, and the busy hum of insects. Above all, the modulations of the human voice afford us a perpetual source of observation. From thence we may gather the expression of every stormy passion which agitates, and every tender affection which soothes the heart. Nor can we listen to the fairy tones of children, their light-hearted carols, their bursts of tiny merriment, their mimic griefs, and simply-told stories, without imbibing some new and charming combinations of harmonious expression. If music brings no lovely thoughts and associations to your mind, you are learning it to very little purpose. If it does, an intimate acquaintance with the music of nature will invest the expression of those thoughts with a grace and refinement, which the most persevering practice will fail to impart. Take lessons of the winds and of the waters, and of the trees; of all animate and all inanimate nature. So shall the very spirit of sweet sound and expression enter into your bosom, and lie there, ready to pour itself forth upon the otherwise low and mechanical music, which the pressure of your hands produces on the instrument. One of Handel's finest pieces is said to have been suggested by the labor of a blacksmith at his anvil; so successfully did he watch for the harmony that lies wrapped in the commonest sounds.'

'*The next rule I shall give you is, to listen attentively to skilful performers;* noticing particularly what emotions are excited in your mind by every passage; and by what means they contrive to produce the effect which pleases you. The gratification we derive from listening to music, is similar to that which poetry imparts to us. Both these delightful arts call into being a thousand beautiful imaginations, tender feelings, and passionate impulses. But in

reading poetry, we are delighted with the thoughts of another person; and though a beautiful idea will give us new pleasure every time we recur to it, still this pleasure is little varied, and depends on the conformation of the poet's mind, rather than of our own. The delights of music are of our own creation. We become for the time poets ourselves, and enjoy the high privilege of inventing, combining, and diversifying, at pleasure, the images which harmonious sounds raise on our minds. The self-same melody may be repeated a hundred times, and inspire each time a train of thought different from the last. Sometimes it will call forth all the hidden stores of memory—absent friends, voices long silent in the tomb, lovely scenes, pleasant walks, and happy hours, come back to us in all their freshness and reality. Then the future opens its dreary prospects, gilded by hope, and chastened by a mournful tenderness. The exile is restored in glad anticipation to his country; the prodigal sobs out his penitence on his father's bosom; the child of affliction is safely lodged in that mansion where sorrow and crying are unknown. Sometimes the past is forgotten, the future unheeded, the mind wrapped up in the present consciousness of sublimity or beauty. Forms of delicate loveliness, things such as dreams are made of, float before the mental vision, shaped into something of a waking distinctness. Thoughts too noble to last, high and holy resolves, gushings of tenderness, alternately possess our minds with emotions all equally different, and equally delightful. The poetical inspiration of Alfieri seldom came upon him, but when he was under the influence of music. Haydn's symphonies were all composed so as to shadow forth some simple and affecting story, by which the author excited and varied his own feelings, and wrought them up to that pitch of solemn pathos, or animated gayety, which to this day, inspires all who hear his music with corresponding emotions.¹

The Christian tone and descriptive beauty of the concluding paragraphs will be generally admired. They are in the style of her favorite writer, Jeremy Taylor.

* The expression of sacred music comprehends every emotion that can agitate the human heart, and must be felt rather than described. The subdued tones of awful adoration; the impassioned fervor of desire; the humility of prayer; the wailing of penitential sorrow; the glad notes of thanksgiving; and the loud chorus of praise; all these have their own peculiar utterance, and must be pervaded by a depth and solemnity which shall distinguish them from the meaner affections of humanity.

'I am fearful of touching too lightly upon this hallowed subject. Many young persons, when their feelings are excited by sacred music, imagine themselves to be bettered by such feelings, and to be under the influence of genuine religious sentiments. But if the plain majesty of the word of God does not suffice to kindle an equal fervor within us, when we are reading it silently and alone, we

¹ Pp. 25—26.

may be sure that the emotions excited by the lovely songs and pleasant instruments of men are the mere ebullitions of natural feeling, and have nothing to do with religion. Those who would sing the praises of the Lord, must "sing them with understanding."¹ The undying torch of truth must be lighted up in that faculty, before it can set the heart in a flame. There exists not a more dangerous delusion, than to mistake the feverish excitement of the imagination for the cheerful and steady glow of a rational devotion.

' But while I so anxiously guard you against this pernicious error, do not for a moment suppose, that I would shut you out from the privilege which all creation enjoys, of sounding its Maker's praise. Oh ! there is a harmony in nature, inconceivably attuned to one glad purpose ! Everything in the universe has a voice, with which it joins in the tribute of thanksgiving. The whispers of the wind playing with the summer foliage, and its fitful moanings through the autumnal branches ; the broken murmur of the stream, the louder gushing of the waterfall, and the wild roar of the cataract, all speak the praises of God to our hearts. Who can sit by the sea-side, when every wave lies hushed in adoration, or falls upon the shore in subdued and awful cadence, without drinking in utterable thoughts of the majesty of God ! The loud hosannas of Ocean in the storm, and the praises of God on the whirlwind, awaken us to the same lesson ; and every peal of the thunder is a hallelujah to the Lord of Hosts. Oh ! there is a harmony in nature ! The voice of every creature tells us of the goodness of God. It comes to us in the song of the birds ; the deep, delicious tones in which the wood-dove breathes out its happiness ; the graceful melting descant of the nightingale ; the joyous thrilling melody of the lark ; the thrush's wild warbling, and the blackbird's tender whistle ; the soft piping of the bullfinch ; the gay carol of the wren ; the sprightly call of the goldfinch ; and the gentle twittering of the swallow. Even now when every other bird is silent, little robin is pouring out his sweetest of all sweet notes upon yonder rose-bush ; and so distinctly does he thank God, who made the berries to grow for him upon the hawthorn and mountain-ash, and who has put it into the heart of man to love him, and strew crumbs for him when the berries fail, that my soul, too often insensible to its own mercies, is warmed into gratitude for his. The very insect tribe have entered into a covenant that God shall at no season of the year be without a witness amongst them to his praise. For when the hum of the bees and the chirping of the grasshopper have ceased to enliven us, and the gnat has laid by his horn, then the little cricket wakens into life and song, and gladdens our heart with the same story till the winter is past. And so all nature praises God, and is never weary. If then you are able "to make melody in your *heart* to the Lord," let your hand and your voice make melody too, and

¹ Psalm xlvi. 7. 1 Corinthians xiv. 14.

let the faculty which infinite benevolence has created for your enjoyment, be converted, as all your other faculties should be, into the instrument of praise. To know that you make this worthiest use of your musical acquirements will indeed rejoice the heart of

‘Your affectionate Friend and Cousin,
‘MARY.’

The following exercise throws out some additional thoughts upon the connection of poetry and music alluded to in her tract. It was written in the form of a letter to her cousin, for the Italian master then in attendance upon them. As she wrote Italian with considerable spirit, and took some pains with the composition, it may have slightly suffered in a translation.

‘1824.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,

‘Yesterday I was told of an observation you had made in the conversazione of Mr. B. (where unfortunately I could not meet you,) and as I do not agree with you upon the interesting subject then discussed, I will make it the subject of this letter, begging you to excuse all the dullness, which you will certainly find in my composition. Is it possible, that you have conceived so low an opinion of the pleasures derived from harmony, that they do not appear to you worthy of being compared with those of poetry? I cannot let you rest in this opinion. Allow me to impart to my friend some of the delight which I find in this enchanting art. Not that I wish to say a word against poetry—that purest and most sublime delight of the human mind. Too dear to me are its sweet illusions, in which the usual sense of the ills of the present life is lost, whilst the soul lives in a world properly her own, and sports with beings created and adorned by herself. My intention is only to show you that the pleasures derived from music are not *inferior* to those of poetry, that both proceed from the same source, and mutually assist and heighten each other. You will perhaps remind me of the great antiquity of poetry, and that from the most remote ages it has been the solace of the wounded heart. But this I cannot yield to you. Indeed it appears to me, that music had an earlier birth, and was the mother of poetry. A shepherd one day discovered the flute which nature has formed in the waving reed. Applying it to his lips, he is struck with the beautiful sounds which issue from it, and he endeavors to imitate them with his voice, in simple songs celebrating the beauties of his shepherdess. By degrees the cadences of the harmony suggest to him the idea of rhyme and metre, and thus these two beautiful arts are formed together, with so perfect a sympathy between them, that the one cannot be outraged without some injury to the other. Let us however leave this discussion upon the origin of these arts, (for it would be tiresome for us to search into the records of past ages,) and turn our attention to what is more interest-

ing, the effects which, in *every* age, they have produced on the heart. I wish to search a little into your motives for giving to poetry so vast a superiority; and the secret spring appears to me to be this: the charms of harmony cause a pleasure perceptible to the senses, and for its enjoyment require a certain physical conformation, a fine and exact ear, and other things, which seem to have a connection with the material part of man. You have therefore persuaded yourself, that it is a thing delightful indeed to the senses, but which has little influence upon the mind and upon the heart. I flatter myself that I shall be able to convince you of the injustice of this idea. Not only does music give us many ideas, but they are of the same description with those inspired by poetry, and sometimes even more delightful to the soul. I allow that the sweet harmony enters by the ear. But thence it diffuses itself through every part of the mind. It moves every passion, softens every affection, and creates a thousand delightful imaginations, a thousand divine projects, which excite to all that is noble in resolve, and worthy in art. If I might draw a distinction between music and poetry, I should say that the former brings us pleasure of a higher degree; the latter of a longer duration. Equally do they inspire soft affections and noble ideas.' Then, after following the same train of thought and imagination as in her Musical Tract,¹ she adds in her fervent glow—'And shall not a science, capable of producing these sentiments, be reckoned among the noblest delights of the human mind? I have not time to continue this interesting subject. But I cannot conclude without observing, that the poets themselves owe their finest ideas to music. Do you recollect the power which it had over the mind of our favorite Alfieri? He could scarcely compose without its help. Many of his noble tragedies were conceived at the opera. But do thou, divine Petrarch, come to help, and show her who admires thee so much, that without the music of nature, the song of birds, the murmur of the streams, thou wouldest not have been able to enchant her with thy delicious rhymes. With these beautiful verses I conclude my letter, already too long, entreating you to yield to his representation of the effect of fine sounds upon the mind.

'Se lamentar angeli, o verdi fronde,' &c.

' You know the rest. I have only time to say, that I am always
 ' Your very affectionate

' MARY.'

Without pronouncing upon the contending claims, (which probably may still be a matter of dispute,) the exercise is not unworthy of the intellectual character of the writer, and is specially interesting, as a burst of that 'vehemence approaching to ecstasy,' which—as Mr. Cecil keenly observed—'the world will allow on almost

¹ See the extract, pp. 124, 125.

every subject, but that which, above all others, will justify it.' If, however, Miss Graham seems here to contend for the precedence of music, she was no less warm a votary of poetry. Though she was no poet herself, and never till the close of her last illness did she exercise even a rhyming propensity, yet her perception of the true genius of the science was lively and accurate, and her enjoyment of its delights proportionate. We have already seen her high zest for Milton. Wordsworth was among her chief modern favorites; and even Lord Byron detained her for a while the victim of his fascinating enchantment. We subjoin a letter of a very early date, descriptive of her feelings, with much discrimination of taste, and with all the glow of her characteristic enthusiasm.

' July 15, 1822.

' I have not seen the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold. I am ashamed to say that I like Manfred. Diabolical as the sentiments of it are in many parts, yet there are some passages of such exquisite beauty and sublimity, that it seems as if a human pen could scarcely have traced them. *All the time I was reading it, I felt I was doing something wrong; yet I read some of it over and over again*, particularly the part where Manfred is upon the point of dashing himself over the precipice. The description of darkness did not please me. I thought it rather horrible than sublime. But I am just now in love with another poet, who is as fond of clothing his pictures with the sunny radiance of happiness and benevolence, as Lord Byron is of spreading over his, darkness and desolation. If you have read any of his trifling poems, you will smile when I mention Wordsworth. But some of his poems are so beautiful! We have just now been reading 'the Excursion.' It is tiresome in many parts; but every now and then you meet with something so strikingly fine, or so unutterably tender, that it is impossible to go on. You must lay down the book, till the ferment it occasions has subsided.'

Should Miss Graham's delight in Lord Byron's writings be a matter of surprise, it may be observed, that her letter distinctly records the rebuke of conscience in her moments of self-indulgence; and we doubt not but her inattention to this rebuke subjected her to the secret frown of her jealous God. We may also add, that shortly after the date of this letter, she readily made the sacrifice of her taste (which to her fervid mind required no ordinary effort) in the total relinquishment of this source of deleterious pleasure. Whatever weight may attach to her judgment will therefore decidedly be found on the side of self-denial, not of self-gratification. Indeed, familiarity with works of poison, whatever be their literary charms, seems inconsistent, not only with Christian simplicity, but with a common regard to our personal welfare. To a pure mind we might have supposed that a rich and splendid fancy would be spoiled of all its attraction by its frequent connection with licentious

profaneness and impiety—moral deformity, sufficient to cast the most exquisite beauties of poetry and genius into the shade; and the very contemplation of which, *except through a scriptural medium*, must be injurious to the best sensibilities of our nature. Even the instruction resulting from the unveiled features of human depravity is obtained—if at all—at considerable hazard. For let it be remembered—as Miss Graham has shown¹—that the direct influence of poetry acts upon the passions, and thus tends to produce a corresponding habit of the mind. The evil propensities therefore portrayed by this master-mind with such awful exactness, an⁴ embracing every form of malignity that can darken the heart of man, naturally excite the working of those passions, which it is the grand design of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to restrain and mortify. Whether, therefore, the infidel poison acts with vindictive activity, or with searching subtlety, its pervading influence is equally to be dreaded. We believe that many Christians, especially in moments of temptation, are reaping the bitter fruit of former indulgence; and we are persuaded that none will ultimately have reason to regret the sacrifice of the high pleasures of taste to the far higher claims of their own spiritual interests.

We add one further quotation from Miss Graham's manuscript upon a subject not wholly unconnected with the preceding—works of imagination in a more legitimate, though still a questionable, form—*Religious Novels*. Observing, that ‘the taste of the serious public is lamentably vitiated’—she adds, ‘The press teems with religious novels, from the long eventful story to the ephemeral trifles, which eke out the pages of the spruce magazine. The greater part of these are feeble to a degree that would render them harmless, were there not a large proportion of readers, whose sickly appetite hankers after such unwholesome food. A few of them, I own, stand out from the rest, and compel our admiration. Yet, I must be permitted to say, that the very interest excited by these superior productions increases their bad tendency. How strange a medley of sensations agitates the heart, that is fluttering between the emotions excited by the well-pictured charms of religion, and the love-scene that is better pictured still! How shall the young and inexperienced distinguish between earthly and heavenly feelings? How shall they determine, whether their agitation arises out of romance or religion; from a heated imagination, or a heart warmed with Divine love?

‘I cannot conceive the use or propriety of introducing this kind of sentimental narrative into works professedly of a religious nature. Truth is not adorned but disguised, by being thus tricked out in false glitter and tinsel ornament. There are but two classes of readers; *the converted and the unconverted*. Those of *the former description* would derive more benefit and pleasure too from praying over one verse of the Bible, than from reading a whole library of the

¹ See pp. 124, 127.

above-mentioned performances. They will neither assist him to understand the word of truth himself, nor to explain it to others. It may be truly affirmed of the decided Christian, that for his own sake, the less he reads besides the Bible, the better.¹ But for the sake of his fellow-men, his reading must be more extensive. He must seek to enlarge and confirm his general knowledge; must be prepared to meet inquiry, to cope with prejudice and error; to recommend the cause of religion; "to become," with the Apostle, "all things to all men."² It is not, however, by giving his time to the works in question, that he will attain this desirable object. His mental character will only be deteriorated by their enervating influence. They will tend to impair both the inclination and capacity for solid intellectual exertion. It has been urged in their defence, that they will open to him a more extended view of human nature. But this will be much more effectually obtained by comparing the scripture statement with his own daily experience and observation. Another argument in their favor is, that they afford a useful key to the character and manners of society. These, however, for the most part, are sketched with no very skilful hand. They might with greater accuracy and less expense of time, be collected from some of the masterpieces of authors not professedly religious. In short, considering that the Christian part of the community has so much to do, and so short a space to do it in, it must ever be matter of regret, that so large a proportion of their time and talent should be expended in making idlers and castle-builders.

'But we turn our regard to the careless and gay. We are called upon to observe the effect of these publications upon their minds. We are reminded, that many young persons of lively imagination and warm feelings, who would scarcely look into a serious book, may be tempted to peruse these lighter works and derive benefit from the perusal. I admit the first part of this proposition, but deny the conclusion that is drawn from it, except in a few, a very few instances, which are to be regarded rather as exceptions than as a general rule. Rare, however, as these instances are, they are by no means to be despised. They indicate that every narrative of this description must not be included in one sweeping condemnation, not pronounced entirely useless, since the sovereign

¹ This is rather a questionable affirmation. *The general knowledge*, which our Authoress admits to be beneficial to the Christian in the service of others, is of considerable advantage to himself. It enlarges his own mind. It throws much valuable light upon the contents of the sacred volume. It not only qualifies him to expound it to others, but it enables him to elucidate many of its difficulties for his own satisfaction, and extends his views of its intellectual and moral, as well as spiritual treasures. Miss Graham's own case may be placed in opposition to her statement. As to *Religious Reading*, though an indiscriminate or disproportioned indulgence of it is most injurious to our simplicity and establishment in the Gospel; yet the writer may be permitted to observe, (discarding all reference to himself,) that the labors of the pen as well as of the tongue, have been honored as a means of abundant edification to the church of God. See R. E. Bickersteth's *Christian Student*—a most valuable development of the principles and obligations of Christian knowledge.

² 1 Cor ix. 22.

grace of God will occasionally use even them for its purpose. But they do not prove the necessity of sending forth such immense shoals of these productions, that one would think they were designed to supersede and swallow up every other. A few would answer the purpose just as well. Even while I concede thus much, I am inclined to ask—‘ Do you not in a measure *create* the taste, to which you profess only to *accommodate yourselves*? Will not this indisposition to all solid and valuable reading be exceedingly encouraged by your indulgent connivance ?’ I much doubt both the lawfulness and expediency of this mode of decoying people into religion. I fear that the quantity of good which flows from it is greatly overbalanced by the quantity of evil. The religion inspired by such reading is of a doubtful nature. There is more of earth in it than of heaven. A young person, whose tears flow over a professed novel, is in no danger of mistaking the excitement of feeling for the fervor of devotion. Not so with these ambiguous compositions. Romance and religion are so allied, that we may suppose the latter of these to be embraced, when in effect her presence is only tolerated for the sake of her fascinating companion. Dressed in the sober garb of truth, she will too probably be rejected by those, who permitted her to court them under the bewitching veil of fiction. And is it for the sake of exciting this spurious devotion, that we run the hazard of destroying the correct and simple feeling of the rising generation, and encourage the prevalence of a style of writing, which can never rise into genuine sublimity, or fix itself upon a basis of native solidity and strength ?

This extract will be generally admitted to mark considerable power of writing and of thought. The subject demands much accuracy of discrimination to place it in its true light. To proscribe works of imagination in the mass would include a much wider sweep of condemnation than novels religious or irreligious. It would banish from our reading much that is not merely purely innocent, but intrinsically valuable ; and seal up the fountain of much elegant and instructive literature. We might indeed adduce Dr. Chalmers’ writing, for the proof, that the corruption is in the application—not in the faculty—of the imagination, which was given, like every other faculty, for the service of God and of his church. But an infinitely higher authority meets us in the Divine parables of our great Teacher, immediately acting upon this most valuable faculty for the illustration and enforcement of his important truths. And this example is the more to our purpose, as fixing the limit and direction, as well as legitimating the employment of fiction. The imagination is placed in immediate contact with plain and sober truth ; while it derives its primary interest, not from its own representations, but from the truth which it was intended to exhibit.

With all these allowances, however, the general introduction of fiction into the cause of truth, is, as Miss Graham observes, of very doubtful benefit ; or, even admitting the prospect of usefulness to be

more determinate, it has proceeded very far beyond the necessity of the case. Even in works of a religious character, we are too often caught up into an ideal world of poetry or romance, from whence the descent is somewhat painful to the sober realities of sin and misery—of “vanity and vexation of spirit.” Now minds formed for effective usefulness need to be conversant with the solidity of truth, not with this visionary atmosphere of fiction; while the indulgence of this artificial character fosters a baneful spirit of excitement: generates a distaste for well-regulated studies; creates a taste for novel reading of a more detrimental character; weakens the habit of self-control, so essential to the strengthening of the intellectual and moral principles; and brings a habit of sentimentalism into the religious profession, in the stead of simple and practical spirituality.¹

The most effectual remedy against this existing and unfruitful indulgence, is to fill up the time with those solid pursuits, which leave no room, while they mortify the taste, for works of doubtful utility; and to bring our intellectual recreations to the test of the Scripture rule, which Miss Graham on a former occasion so justly inculcated, for the proof of the legitimacy of our principles and enjoyments: “Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”²

We conclude this selection from Miss Graham’s writings and correspondence, with an abstract of ‘Letters on the Duties of a Governess,’ a series of which she had contemplated for the use of her young cousin, then looking forward to this important and most responsible situation. She commenced her plan during her last illness, and with great difficulty wrote two letters in pencil from her dying bed. Though too incomplete in thought and style for publication, yet her manuscript will afford some interesting illustration of Christian principle, and many valuable suggestions of general instruction for the use of those young persons who are now filling, or who are prospectively anticipating this interesting station in the domestic economy.

These letters appear to have been one of Miss Graham’s last efforts for one, whose best interests formed one of her most tender ties to life. After commencing with the most affectionate expression of her deep-toned anxiety for her, she thus proceeds to remind her of her Christian responsibility.

‘The great wish of my heart for you,’ she writes, ‘is—not that you may be a very learned or accomplished governess, (though these are highly valuable considerations in their place)—but that, possessing as large a measure of these things as your means and

¹ Many works of fiction may be read with safety; some even with profit. But the constant familiarity, even with such as are not exceptionable in themselves, relaxes the mind, that wants hardening; dissolves the heart, which wants fortifying; stirs the imagination, which wants quieting; irritates the passions, which want calming; and abandons, disinclines, and disqualifies for active virtues and for spiritual exercises. The habitual indulgence in such reading, is a silent, mining mischief.—*Hannah More.*

² 1 Cor. x. 31. Comp. p. 424, 430.

abilities will allow, *you may be truly and decidedly a Christian governess.* For, oh! my dearest —, *yours is a charge of souls.* The spiritual welfare of your pupils is subordinately committed to your care; and at your hands will the neglect of this solemn trust be required?

In this first preparatory letter she is chiefly occupied in inculcating upon her cousin the Christian principle of faith in Christ, in all its detailed application to the circumstances, trials, and encouragements of the situation of a governess.

'I can only offer my advice to you as a Christian. I know but of two states to which children can be brought up; for heaven or for hell; for time or for eternity. I am departing out of time; and knowing that both for you and them, time soon shall be no more, I dare not go upon any system but one fitting for souls born for immortality. Every word, then, that I write, must be on the supposition that the glory of God, and the eternal happiness of your pupils, are your first aim; and that every other object, however praiseworthy in itself, is only secondary and subservient to this one grand object of a Christian teacher's existence.

'I exhort you to enter upon the new and arduous duties of your situation, "*looking to Jesus.*"¹ Remember that he is "the author and finisher of your faith;" that you cannot stir one step without his aid; and the moment you begin to look off from him to any other object, that moment will your steps begin to slide. Fix your eyes, then, steadily upon him. "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so let your eyes be upon the Lord your God,"² in all times, in all places, and in all circumstances."

'And first, I earnestly recommend you to "*look unto Jesus*" in *your choice of a situation.* Pray constantly for Divine assistance and direction on this most important subject. This implies that you intend to seek for a situation among God's people; for I suppose you will hardly ask God to give you any other. You may deem it unlikely that you should obtain a situation in so limited a sphere. But your dying friend would remind you—"The God who has led me all my life long," never forsook me upon any occasion, when I put my trust in him. The word of truth assures you, that "He has never forsaken *any*, who put their trust in him."³ Nor will he forsake you, if you commit your way to him on this important occasion. From Abraham's time until now, the Christian's motto has ever been—"The Lord will provide."⁴ Only "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths."⁵ I charge it upon you, beloved —, as my dying, earnest wish, that you take every proper means to obtain a situation among decided Christians; and that, *as far as it may be in your power*, (for I know that it may not be always possible

¹ Hebrews xii. 2.

⁴ Gen. xxii. 14.

² Psalm cxxiii. 2.

⁵ Psalm xxxvii. 7, 8. Prov. iii. 6.

³ Psalm ix. 10.

for you to direct your own conduct) you join yourself to those who "are not of the world,"¹ and to no others. An established Christian might go in faith under the clear guidance of Providence, into a worldly or irreligious family; and (if the parent would allow of her interference) she might be made a blessing to the whole family. But such a step, *wilfully taken*, would be a serious—perhaps a fatal—injury to an undecided Christian. In a vast multitude of cases, the natural consequence of choosing a lot among the children of this world has been, that indecision in religion has become indifference; indifference has terminated in aversion; and the wretched professor has shown herself openly on the side of the world, tormented with the sting of her former convictions, and vainly contrasting her worldly mirth with "the voice of rejoicing and salvation," which she had heard "in the tabernacles of the righteous."²

"On the other hand, a situation in a truly Christian family will cover you from many worldly temptations, and afford you many important opportunities of marking the beauty and happiness of religion. Under a kind Christian mother, you may be directed and encouraged in extensive usefulness to your pupils, while at the same time you are receiving valuable advantages for your own mind. Under all circumstances, be assured that you will find the blessing of taking the first great step of your life—"looking unto Jesus."

"Look unto Jesus" also, for strength to perform the duties of your situation. These you will find to be many and arduous, such as in your own strength you can never rightly perform. The more correct and enlarged your view of those duties, the more readily you will sink under them, unless you can "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." But remember, "you can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth you." "His grace is sufficient for you;"³ and his encouragement is—"Ask, and it shall be given you." Let a sense of your continual need stir you up constantly to apply to him for his aid, not only in your spiritual duties, but in your teaching, in your studies, in the very least and meanest of your employments. Thus "out of weakness" you will be made "strong." You will not soon "be weary in well doing; for they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."⁴

'Look to him for counsel in the difficulties of your situation. Remember that he is not only your strength, but your "wisdom." When your path is so intricate and perplexed, that you know not which way to turn, then ask the Lord to "lead you in a plain path," to "order your steps in his word."⁵ In every little, as well as in every great perplexity, follow David's rule to "inquire of the Lord."⁶ The advice of friends is ever to be sought and valued; but that of the kindest and wisest may sometimes be insufficient or erroneous,

¹ John xvii. 25.

² Psalm cxviii. 15.

³ Ephes. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 13. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Matt. vii. 7, 8.

⁵ Ps. xxvii. 11; cxix. 133.

⁴ Gal. vi. 9. Isa. xl. 31.

⁶ 1 Sam. xxiii. 2, 4, 9—12. 2 Sam. v. 19, 23.

or given in a harsh injudicious manner. But the Lord giveth not only advice, but "wisdom, liberally and without upbraiding."¹

"Look unto Jesus" for comfort and encouragement in all the trials and disappointments of your situation. The life of a governess is peculiarly subject to *little daily crosses and vexations*. These, as well as greater ones, are to be borne, by laying them upon Jesus. No burden is too great or too little to be cast upon the Lord. A cheerful looking unto Jesus, an assurance that he ever loveth and ever careth for us, will bear us through many petty annoyances, which sometimes wear health and spirits much more than real and great grievances.

Lastly, "Look unto Jesus" for a certain reward upon your labor. You have a promise—"Train up a child in the way he should go; and, when he is old, he will not depart from it."² Ask for patient, earnest faith, to plead this promise importunately, incessantly with him. "All the promises of God are yea and amen to us in Christ Jesus,"³ and while we pray for, we ought to expect their fulfilment. "He is faithful that promised."⁴ The great Sower will assuredly watch over the seed that is sown in faith, and will bring it to perfection. You may labor day after day for the souls of the children under your care, and yet see them as careless and unconcerned as ever; but look steadily unto Jesus; tarry contentedly the Lord's leisure; "for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not."⁵

In her second letter she enters into a detail of some of the pleasures and discomforts of the life of a governess. Under the former head she remarks:

"The life of a governess, however dull and monotonous it may sometimes be thought, has many pleasures of a very refined and superior nature. Among the first of these, I reckon the *usefulness and importance of the task in which she is daily engaged*. Compare the recollections of a day spent to some valuable purpose, with the reflections which follow one that has been frittered away in trifling and vanity, or absorbed in selfish gratifications; and you will see at once, if you know it not already, how great the pleasure of usefulness must be to every rational thinking being. But to the Christian, this is not only pleasing, but necessary. It is his pleasure and delight to lay himself out for the glory of God, and the good of his fellow-creatures. For this he is content to "wait all the days of his appointed time";⁶ and much as he longs for the pleasures that are prepared for him above; yet if his abiding in the flesh be needful for the sake of one living being, he would not "depart," even "to be with Christ."⁷ I know of no employment in which a Christian woman can be more profitably engaged, than in watching over the spiritual and mental improvement of children. The young beings intrusted to her care may form the comfort and delight of parents, brethren, husbands, friends, children. They may grow up

¹ James i. 5.

⁵ Gal. vi. 9.

² Prov. xxii. 6.

⁶ Job xiv. 14.

³ 2 Cor. i. 20.

⁷ See Phil. i. 23, 24.

⁴ Heb. x. 23.

to be happy in themselves, and blessings to society. Above all, they may be so many "jewels" added to the Redeemer's crown, and may themselves "turn many souls unto righteousness." To be the instrument (under God) of the smallest particle of this good, must be inexpressible delight.

Nothing invigorates our progress so much as encouraging prospects of success. This is the undoubted privilege of a teacher of youth. Not to speak of those promises of God, mentioned in my last letter, and which of themselves suffice to make us "against hope to believe in hope,"¹ the human probabilities of moral and intellectual improvement, from which God permits us to draw encouragement, are most enlivening. To reform the manners, to eradicate the prejudices, to correct the tempers, of those whom age has matured, and set as it were in the form which they must afterwards retain, is indeed a most difficult task. But with the young, where we have to form instead of to reform, to prevent rather than to eradicate: patient instruction, and unremitting watchfulness, will, in ordinary cases, succeed to a very considerable degree. And though divine grace only can subdue their evil tempers and dispositions, human means may do much towards restraining that outward violence, which so often makes young people not only wretched in themselves, but an occasion of sorrow to all connected with them. The same advantage is connected with Christian grace and improvement. The minister preaches with holy earnestness to his adult congregation: but it is to the young of his flock not yet hardened in sin or in worldly habits, that he turns with peculiar hope and encouragement. To this comparatively tender and unoccupied soil, he consigns his seed, in the cheerful confidence that it will spring up, and bring forth fruit to perfection. These are the hopeful beings with whom you will have to deal; and as youth is the season of hope and expectation, so is your task peculiarly one of hope and glad anticipations.

In the attachment of her pupils, a kind governess finds another perpetual source of pleasure. This you are almost sure to obtain by a habit of considerate and affectionate intercourse with them, especially if they come under your care at an early age. It is delightful to be beloved by those, whom we have thus bound to us by the cords of gratitude and love. For the justness and clearness of most of their notions; for their ability to discern what is good, and to enjoy what is delightful and intellectual; for all their knowledge and many of their pleasures, your pupils will probably (if you conduct yourself according to my hopes) be indebted to you. They will scarcely ever fail to manifest warm attachment to one, who has so many claims on their gratitude. They must love their faithful adviser, their kind and intelligent teacher, their cheerful, entertaining companion, and their affectionate and sympathizing friend.

¹ Rom iv. 18.

'The improvement of your own mind is also a source of inexpressible delight. A conscientious governess will be perpetually and delightfully improving herself. While explaining subjects to her pupils, her own views become clearer; while she is teaching them facts or words, her own recollection of them is refreshed and strengthened. The arrangement of her knowledge for the use of her pupils is of the highest advantage to herself. She must learn to think clearly, that she may be able to express her meaning clearly to her young and ignorant auditors; and if her own acquaintance with the subject be obscure, imperfect, or superficial, the attempt to teach will soon discover it to her, and compel her to correct it. Thus her previously acquired knowledge will be more solid and permanent, while she will be continually adding to its store. Often she may not be able readily to answer her pupils' questions. Further researches, therefore, on her part are necessary; and thus the demands of her teaching stimulate to perpetual increase of her attainments.

' I mention one more privilege connected with the life of a governess. Next to the improvement of her own mind, and indeed *because of the improvement that it yields to her own mind, is the pleasure of gaining an insight into the minds of others, into the human mind in general.* In cultivating a flower-garden, there are few pleasures equal to that of watching the tender buds, as they unfold, one by one, their beauteous petals. How delightful is it to admire the wisdom of God, who teaches them to peep in due season from their mantle of green; bids the sun to clothe them in all the colors of the rainbow; and endues them with shapes so varied, and so perfect, that the little flower has been the joy and solace of man's breast in every age! But what is this to the pleasure of watching the mind of a little child, as those faculties which lay wrapped within its tiny folds begin gradually to expand, each in its order; every day witnessing the drawing forth of some new idea, or the unfolding of some latent power? And at a later age to watch those powers and faculties, as they daily improve and strengthen; to see the unformed and untaught child, grow up before your eyes into the graceful, refined, and intellectual woman; to mark every step by which it is effected, and to be yourself employed as an instrument in effecting it; all this is a source of such continual and ever-varying delight, that to my mind it amply compensates for the tediousness and fatigue of teaching. And then there is the pleasure of watching, not only different faculties, but different minds; of comparing their several degrees of development, and the peculiar combination of faculties, which constitutes the formation of each peculiar turn of mental temperament. You may probably find among your pupils many instances of this endless variety; the more quick and ready mind; the lively and imaginative; the clear and decided; the solid and steady; the strong, the deep, the energetic, the inquiring, the contemplative. You will find that each of these will develop itself in a peculiar manner, and put forth their several

powers and faculties with different degrees of vigor and perfection. As an intelligent gardener, in order that his different flowers may open and expand to perfection, exposes them to every degree of air and heat, and treats them with every variety of soil; so will you find the most varied modes of treatment necessary in assisting the development of your mental blossoms, and in contending with the defects peculiar to each. These will be gradually suggested to you by experience; and will assist you much in combating the defects of your own mind, which the course of your teaching in a watchful habit of self-inspection will bring before you. And as the child is but the copy of the man, you will thus be better enabled to discern the intellectual beauties and defects of those with whom you converse. The dull and prosy cease to be wearisome, while we are easily employed in inquiring into the causes of their imperfections, how they might have been, or might still be corrected.

The *advantages you will gain in watching the tempers and dispositions of your pupils* will be yet more valuable and important. This, however, is a less pleasing task. The fall of man, though it has made shipwreck of every mental faculty, has still left the wreck as it were, the sadly obscured and mutilated remains of what was once so noble and beautiful. But our tempers and dispositions it has totally perverted. To study the varieties of the natural heart, is but to study selfishness and pride, in all the various forms of virtue and vice, which they have assumed for the delusion and destruction of mankind. Yet, the high importance of this study, with the word of God for our guide, will fully compensate for its painful disappointments. If God gives me life and strength, I shall again have occasion to touch on these points; I will therefore leave them now, and proceed to some of the disadvantages connected with a governess's situation; not to discourage you, but to prepare you, if I can, in some cases to avoid, in others, to meet them cheerfully.

Her exhibition of the discomforts of the life of a governess shows much good sense and knowledge of character in the true spirit of Christian sympathy. The most delightful characteristic, however, is the habitual bent of her mind, ever turning, like the magnetic needle, to the point of attraction. Thus, in the first inconvenience that she mentions, *the separation of the governess from her own domestic circle*—she naturally draws out an application, which seems to say with the church of old—"Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"¹ 'This grievance,' as she justly observes, 'is often lighter than is anticipated. Strangers cannot live long in the same house without ceasing to be strangers; and where there is a due proportion of encouraging kindness on the one hand, and of respectful confidence on the other; friendship will soon take place of strangeness and reserve. This is particularly the case, where both parties are sincere Christians. The love of their common Lord begets such

¹ Canticles iii. 3.

feelings of union and sympathy between them, that the hand of fellowship is soon held forth and accepted, as if they had long known and loved each other. They know so much about each other, of which the rest of the world is ignorant ; they feel themselves so much of “strangers and pilgrims upon earth,” that they cannot but rejoice at meeting with a fellow-sojourner, who, like themselves, “has no continuing city, but seeks that better country,”¹ to which their own steps are directed. Added to this general feeling amongst the Lord’s people, the Christian mother may surely be expected to receive with peculiar interest and affection the young person whom she has engaged to assist her in bringing up for God those dear objects of her love, for whose temporal and spiritual welfare she cries unto Him night and day. Even should you fail of obtaining this privilege ; should your employers be ever so cold and distant ; still the affections of your pupils conciliated to you by affectionate and judicious treatment, will be objects of incessant interest to fill up the void in your heart, in the consciousness of loving and being loved. And I think that a teacher of youth thus blessed and encouraged will seldom be inclined to reckon her condition very desolate or forlorn. But even should this comfort be denied you (a misfortune I hope and trust very unlikely to happen in your case), I have to remind you of another source of consolation, which can never fail or disappoint you. If you now give yourself to Jesus, you can never be wholly amongst strangers ; for your best, dearest friend—one who is “born for adversity, who sticketh closer than a brother”—is with you, yea, and has promised to be “with you to the end of the world.”² And oh ! what a friend and comforter is Jesus ! How abundant in loving-kindness ! How tender in sympathy ! How rich in counsel ! How “meek and lowly” in reproof ! How wise to direct ! How mighty to help ! How slow to anger ! How ready to forgive ! What a faithful, unfailing, promise-keeping friend !

Against ‘the feeling of afflictive solitariness’—a measure of which, under the most favorable circumstances, must belong to absence from the happy family circle—she suggests the following alleviating considerations. The Christian turn which she gives to the first suggestion is exquisitely beautiful :

‘*Think first*, what a common privation it is. Almost every family disperses, as the younger part arrive at maturity. One son perhaps remains at home to support his father’s declining years, and to fill his place when he shall be no more. The others betake themselves to distant parts, and are often content to look forward to a re-union in ten, twenty, or thirty years. The daughters probably marry, and accompany their husbands to remote situations, from whence they return once in a few months or years, to visit the still dear party at home. This you will say is an unfair comparison. For the happy young wife goes with her husband,

¹ Hebrews xiii. 14 ; xi. 16.

² Matthew xxviii. 20.

who is more to her than all the friends of home; and she is soon settled in a new home; and surrounded by a family and friends still dearer to her than those she has left. True, my dear — ; and this is what I wish you to bear upon your mind in every trial you may have to encounter. The happy wife misses not the home of her youth; because, wherever she goes, she carries with her that which is better to her than home; and her pleasures now are superior to those she has relinquished. And thus the devoted Christian, whether married or unmarried, has with her, wherever she goes, the cheering presence of one, who is far dearer to her than husband, parents, brothers, sisters, or friends. She has made her home in the bosom of her God and Saviour. Thither she flies for sympathy and direction. In that kind bosom she can pour forth her joys and sorrows, far better than to the tenderest relatives or friends. She has nothing “in heaven besides her God, nor on earth any she desires in comparison of him.” She must feel as a stranger even in her own home, if it be composed of such as know not the name of Jesus; and wherever that beloved name is known and esteemed, there she is happy and at home. Go where she will, she cannot journey to the place where God is not; go where she will, she is still drawing near to that home, on which her thoughts and affections are fixed.’

Another ground of alleviation is very pointedly and sensibly set forth.

‘This painful separation from home, is in reality (under present circumstances) the best and happiest thing for you. Were two situations equally eligible to present themselves, and were I asked to assist you in your choice, assuredly the one near home would not be the object of my preference. A continual recurrence to the comforts and liberty of home, makes every little restraint and discomfort of a situation doubly irksome and annoying. The poor governess, who has the misnamed privilege of perpetual access to her home, returns from it in no very favorable mood to a place where she cannot (at least at first) be loved, caressed, and appreciated, as amongst her own friends. It is but too natural, that she should consider every little departure from the unlimited and perhaps injudicious indulgence, which she has just experienced, as an actual deviation from the law of kindness and equity; that she should magnify every real or fancied slight into contempt, every expression of disapproval into a harsh reproof, and every degree of strictness in requirement into an unreasonable exaction. Soon the very nearness of her home tempts her steps thither again. There the well-filled budget of petty trials and vexations, which few young persons have the wisdom to conceal within their own bosoms, or to tell to none but God, is emptied out before partial relatives, who hear but one side of the story, and are too apt to take it for granted, that there is no other way of telling it. They cannot refuse to sympathize and console; and while they are wondering that such an attention was omitted, such a fault found, or such a duty ex-

acted, they little suspect themselves to be the cause of the forlorn and disconsolate state of their dear relation. Nor does the evil end here. Her mind divided between her pupils and home, cannot fully and affectionately employ all its energies in the service of the former. Too often will her absent looks and languid attention betray the fact so injurious for pupils to discover, that her mind can wander as well as theirs ; and that their improvement and entertainment are objects which soon slide out of her thoughts, when occupied by subjects of more pleasant contemplation. Nor have I yet made the obvious remark, that the time lost in these frequent visits, however short, must deprive her of many opportunities of private improvement ; and thus prove in the end extremely detrimental both to herself and her younger charge. From these considerations, a moderate distance from home is far preferable, from whence at stated and proper intervals you are permitted to revisit your friends. And I think that such reflections as these might enable us to bear the discomforts even of a long separation from home, not merely with patience, but with thankfulness.

'I cannot quit this subject without strongly cautioning you, not too hastily to accuse the parents of your pupils of being unkind or unreasonable, because they are not willing to grant you leave of absence whenever you think fit to ask it. They, perhaps, with more justice, may think the unreasonableness to be all on your side. It is both right and natural, that they should anxiously desire the improvement of their children in every branch of instruction to which their attention has been directed ; and they know that this is only to be attained by a steady course of persevering application. They know that every interruption to this course must have a pernicious effect, by weakening habits newly formed, and permitting old and bad habits to revive ; by unsettling the mind in all its pursuits, and blotting out much of what has been already learned. If, therefore, they oppose your absence, it is because they value your services too much to part with them lightly, or without sufficient cause. There are few cases in which you ought not to submit to their decision. But the best way to prevent any future misunderstanding or disappointment, is to make some arrangement before you enter upon your situation.'

The *frequent change of situation, or the liability to this change*, is well pointed out as a serious evil attending the life of a governess.

'Her duties,' it is observed, 'are becoming easy and delightful to her ; she is beginning to rejoice in the growing attachment of her pupils ; she feels that she can look round on their little faces with a degree of maternal affection ; when some unexpected cause induces or compels her to relinquish her situation. She has long been employed in clearing away the rubbish ; in laying the foundation ; and in collecting and arranging the materials of her intended superstructure, which was beginning to rise with a daily increasing order and symmetry. This state of things might probably appear rude and unfinished to the eye of others ; but it was full of hope and

interest to her, who had been watching its progress from day to day, and confidently awaiting the happy, though distant completion of her labors. Her work must now pass into the hands of another, who neither witnessed its commencement, nor can be aware of many important points connected with its progress. The new teacher, however, succeeds to all the benefits of that preparatory drudgery, with which her predecessor had hoped to pave the way for her own future exertions. It seldom happens that the children are not seriously injured by this change of system. The very act of changing has a tendency to unsettle the mind. The new comer's manner, her new mode of expression, and new system of teaching, must render her at first less intelligible to them, than the familiar voice to which they have been accustomed; and till this disadvantage is conquered, her services must prove less effective. Besides, too often the new governess, confident of the superiority of her own methods of instruction, hastily puts aside the rules and arrangements of her predecessor—not because they are not good, but as if they could not be good, because they were not her own. Then the children also are discouraged and thrown back in many of their studies, that they may be grounded in them on the new system. Perhaps ere long another change is determined—a new teacher comes—and the best methods are displaced by others that are newer and better still. The result of this broken and interrupted education will be a sort of clumsy patchwork, made up of a medley of fine and coarse materials, ill-contrived, ill-assorted, and loosely put together. These are some of the real injuries inflicted on children by the frequent change of domestic administration.

'My chief concern, however, is with the governess. In addition to these mortifying circumstances, she is again thrown upon the world. She must once more take up her abode amongst strangers; her pupils are again unfamiliar to her; she must study their tempers; conciliate their affections; examine and arrange their present acquirements: in short, she must encounter anew every former difficulty. And when all this is effected, and things begin to glide smoothly on, another change, another loss of time and labor, may yet be in prospect for her. The web may be again unravelled; the stone, that had been heaved half-way up the mountain, may roll down again to its very foot. I have dwelt strongly on the evils resulting from a frequent change of situation—not by way of discouragement, but of warning. I am persuaded that, in a large majority of cases, young people might and would retain their engagement in one family much longer than they do, if only they would calmly sit down, and count the serious cost both to themselves and to their pupils, (to which I have alluded,) in relinquishing it.'

It would be difficult in all cases to determine what might be deemed a sufficient reason for relinquishing a situation. A few decidedly insufficient motives are accurately specified.

'I need scarcely suggest, that a trifling increase of salary would be an insufficient reason for quitting a tolerably comforta-

ble situation. Circumstances, such as some urgent family call upon your assistance, might indeed render a change not only excusable but praiseworthy. But without an imperative call, it will be equally your interest and happiness to retain your station. I consider the governess, who will abandon her young charge for the mere sake of a little paltry emolument, much in the same light as the minister, who will leave his larger flock for the same base motive of "filthy lucre," without any clear providential call. This abandonment of present and certain usefulness for the sake of something new and uncertain—whether dictated by the love of gain, or the love of novelty—is not only sinful but imprudent. You are now more or less comfortably settled. You know not how many discomforts may await you in a new situation. You leave those who probably are becoming attached to you, for those who at present neither know nor care anything about you. This is not the way to lay up friends against the time of sickness, distress, or age. The plain path of duty is always the path of prudence. Here only can you expect the "blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich ; and he addeth no sorrow to it."¹ When, however, any tempting offer occurs, the love of gain, so common to all, the love of novelty so inherent in young minds, and the persuasions of older sordid friends, are too likely to prevail with a young person, who is not enabled to hold fast her integrity, by working with a single eye to the service of Christ.

'Nor do I think that any trifling inconvenience should induce you to relinquish an engagement which holds out to you a fair prospect of usefulness. Every situation has its trials and privations ; and it is better, if possible, to put up with those which already fall to your share, than to run the risk of incurring others which may be worse. Besides, these petty hardships are always most severely felt at first. After a time they wear off, and at length cease to occasion any considerable uneasiness. When the temper of either parents or children is a trial to you ; when the parents, through pride, avarice, or inconsideration, fail in a proper attention to your comforts ; when the extreme retirement or excessive bustle of your situation makes it very unpleasant to you, &c.—in these and many other similar cases, I should advise you to make as light of the evil as you can, and to bear with it as long as it can possibly be borne with.'

'Again—let not any sudden fit of despondency induce you to give up your situation. There are few teachers, who cannot recollect a time, when everything seemed to go wrong with them—'No children ever repaid the trouble bestowed on them so little ; no situation ever possessed so few advantages ; no parents were ever so exacting and dissatisfied. In any other family they should succeed better ; here they can neither do justice to their pupils nor to themselves.' Such feelings, which may be expected to arise in

¹ Proverbs x. 22.

times of difficulty and discouragement, mark something very wrong in your own heart, that casts a shade upon all the objects around you ; something that needs—not the indulgent experiment of change of situation—but a special course of self-examination, watchfulness, and prayer, to restore a healthful tone of energy, cheerfulness, and satisfaction to your mind.

' I need scarcely observe, that *no offence, real or fancied*, except *the former* be of a very clear and aggravated character, *could justify you in quitting a family*, in which you may have probably received much kindness, and may receive much more. A governess must expect to be told of her faults, and ought to be thankful for such information as may lead to their correction. Christians indeed too often perform the difficult office of reproof in a very harsh and grating manner ; forgetting that the reproof of "the righteous should be like excellent oil," not to "break," but to heal, the wounded spirit.¹ Yet the harshness with which a censure may be given, forms no excuse for a defect of Christian meekness and love in receiving it. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry ;" but remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."² Indulge not that sensitive temper, which is always looking out for some ground of offence, over which it can brood, till it bursts out into open discontent ; which bristles up at every light and unguarded expression, and is always on the defensive, even when no intentional slight could have been conceived. You will never long retain a situation without a forbearing spirit in respect of many little things, which are grating to a proud and self-conceited temper. Good sense and experience *will indeed help to depress this baneful temper*. For we can scarcely so far shut our eyes to the passing world around us, as to fail in discovering, that the good opinion we may have formed of ourselves is ill-warranted by the general estimation in which we are held ; and that we must expect our full share of inconvenience and neglect. *But true Christian humility can alone conquer the evil*, "by bringing into captivity every high thought to the obedience of Christ."³ The spirit and temper of which we have been speaking is ever ready to take fire at the least provocation, or even without provocation. It exacts not only due respect, but much more than, if it knew itself, it would find to be its due. It can bear with nothing ; it can endure nothing. But do you follow after that "charity which suffereth long and is kind ; is not puffed up ; doth not behave itself unseemly ; seeketh not her own ; is not easily provoked ; beareth all things."⁴

' To sum up what I have said in a few words—when you have taken up your abode in a family, and have fairly set down to the performance of your duties, remember that you are in the station to which God in his providence has called you ; and that nothing but a clear and explicit call of duty or necessity can justify you in quitting it.

¹ Psalm cxli. 5.

³ 2 Cor. x. 5.

² Ecclesiastes vii. 9. Prov. xv. 1.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.

'The causes that might induce your employers to dissolve the engagement (in which case you can have no alternative) very materially depend upon yourself. *Under any ground, just or unjust; of their dissatisfaction with you*, endeavor in the spirit of prayer to sift every part of your conduct, and particularly the part censured, to the very bottom. Put yourself in their place. Make every allowance for the feelings of an anxious parent; and consider what might fairly be expected from you, and how far you have answered those expectations. Under any error discovered, be not ashamed to confess your fault with all candor and humility, and (in higher strength than your own) to promise amendment. To retain your situation by this "voluntary humility" will be truly honorable in the eyes of Christians, who know that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."¹ But supposing that, after sincere self-examination, you cannot acknowledge the justice of the censure, still, as a Christian, strive to conciliate. Do not get warm or angry in your own justification; mildly profess your freedom from any intentional offence or omission; and declare your readiness to redouble your efforts to give satisfaction.

'Should incompetency be alleged against you, I should advise you, rather than give up your engagement in despair or in offence, to endeavor by redoubled diligence and application, especially in the particular ground of complaint, to redeem and establish your character. Christian gentleness and humility to explain and conciliate, and a willingness to correct errors, and to supply omissions, will in many cases restore satisfaction and confidence in the minds of your employers.

'Should however—not any fault or caprice on either side—but some *unavoidable domestic necessity*, dissolve the connection, in this case many mitigating circumstances will present themselves to your mind. In the first place—"It is the Lord;" and not one of his appointments or disappointments is without some wise and gracious purpose. In the next place—all painful feeling of responsibility for any evil that may result from the change is entirely removed. And thus supported by a sense of God's blessing, and a clear conscience, you may look cheerfully forward to your new destination, hoping to gain new friends without losing the old.'

The writer has been induced to quote so largely from these letters, because he is not aware of any work that enters into the details of the principles, characteristics, and sympathies of the life of a governess. Had Miss Graham been permitted to complete her design, her accurate and observant mind would probably have produced a valuable manual for this interesting and important class of society.² In the defect, however, of an entire system of instruction, the pre-

¹ Luke xviii. 14.

² A small volume, lately published,—'Letters to a young Governess, by S. F. Ridout,' contains much valuable suggestion in filling up Miss Graham's imperfect sketch.

ceding hints will be found to suggest much sensible instruction nearly connected with their comfort and usefulness.

In the choice of a governess, solid principle is of far greater moment than accomplishment. Let the intellectual adorning have its due weight and consideration. But after all—the formation of the character upon Christian habits of thinking and conduct—and the storing of the mind with useful knowledge—is the primary concern. Where rectitude of principle have been fully proved, instruction may supply many lesser defects—and redoubled diligence and application will,—as Miss Graham observes,—do much to establish the character, as well as to strengthen the tone of mind. We must, however, preserve an even balance in the adjustment of this important part of domestic economy. If the generality of instructors are too flimsily furnished for their great task, perhaps it may be also said, that the generality of their employers are too niggardly. Though Miss Graham rightly inculcates upon her young governess not to consider stipend a primary matter, yet it is a part of Christian obligation to elevate her in a high rank above the menials of the house, and to consider the claims of aged parents or poor relations, that often press upon her. Where there is no power to give the liberal remuneration that is deserved, special care must be taken to compensate by the coin of affection and esteem—to a sensitive and delicate mind more acceptable than any increased pecuniary consideration. Under all circumstances, let it be remembered, that the labor of instruction is an anxious—and with children of lively and untractable temperament—a very depressing task. Let not, therefore, the slight or caprice of parents, or the contumely of servants, be added to their painful privations and sacrifices. It is too often found, that inconsiderate selfishness and formal pride on the part of the parents materially hinder the effective usefulness of the family instructors. It fosters in them a discontented spirit in the contrast with the tender sympathies of their own home. Their insulated station in the family throws them in irksome solitude upon their own resources; contracts their social affections; and paralyzes that affectionate interest in their charge, which is the soul and energy of a fruitful system of instruction. Whereas a considerate tenderness would return to the parents an abundant recompense, in raising up for their children valuable friends in the persons of their instructors—attached to their interests beyond the prospects of sordid gain—wise, anxious, and sympathizing counsellors to the end of life.

On the other hand, personal hindrances too often restrain the disposition of the employers to incorporate the instructor, as far as is consistent with her station, into the family circle; and this, even when a well-furnished mind and general consistency of conduct would have made her society an important consideration. A want of knowledge or respect for the regulations of decorum—defect of manners—forgetfulness of the due reserve connected with her situation—pedantic tone of conversation—vanity of dress—self importance—a disputatious spirit—a love of authority—affected, or

studied eccentricity of behavior—these or some other failure in the domestic graces—repel the exercise of kindly confidence, and produce a natural, and in some degree a necessary, distance in the deportment of the parents.

Let each side form their mutual behavior upon scriptural rules. Let the one practise the injunction of love—"Whosoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."¹ Let the other "be clothed with humility," and be found in the daily observance of "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."² Thus Christian regard and happiness will be reciprocally diffused, without any compromise of their several obligations.

¹ Matt. vii. 7. 12.

² 1 Peter, v. 5. Phil. iv. 8.

CHAPTER V.

DIFFERENT VIEWS AND FEATURES IN MISS GRAHAM'S CHARACTER.

THE retired and uniform habits of Miss Graham's life scarcely allow of a detailed illustration of *her natural character*. That singular freedom from selfishness, remarked in her early history,¹ appears to have been, by the common consent of all her intelligent friends, a most prominent feature throughout life. One of her young companions, whose subsequent opportunities of observation give weight to her testimony, thus confirms the general remark on this point:—‘The situation which I have filled for some years (in tuition) has of course brought under my notice the various dispositions and peculiar tempers of children in general. From necessity partly, I have studied them. But I have never met with one, who in any degree answered my recollections of Mary Graham. Warm and susceptible in her feelings, she was tender to those of others; nor did she ever suffer any regret or disappointment in her own mind to interfere with the comfort or pleasure of her companions.’ The testimony of her young cousin is to the same purport. ‘I never saw any one so devoid of selfishness, or who took so warm an interest in the happiness of her fellow-creatures. There was not one of my amusements or childish sorrows in which she would not take her share. As I grew up, her kindness in this respect increased.’ This lovely trait was combined with a sweetness and gentleness of disposition, and, being moulded under the influence of divine grace, attracted the regard even of the thoughtless and unobservant. Indeed her young friend first alluded to does not hesitate to assert—‘My earliest remembrance of her is connected with feelings of respect, which, I think I may say, I have scarcely felt in a stronger degree for any one I have since known.’

We have already given her parents' account of *her relative character* under their own roof.² In its wider sphere of operation it may, however, be added, that her natural affection was enlarged in no common degree to all that belonged to her, and manifested in the most important and practical mode of constant prayer and effort for the salvation of their souls. She sometimes spent a great part of the night in earnest and persevering intercession; and on one occasion was known, after she had retired to rest, to arise from her bed to employ herself in special prayer, in behalf of her only brother, who died in America about this time, and for whom she

¹ Page 11.

² Ibid.

never ceased to cherish the hope, that her prayers were heard with acceptance.

The following letter fully enforces the claims of natural affection upon the basis of the high principles of the Gospel. In quickening her friend to a self-denying effort in this path of duty, she writes:—

'Stoke, Jan. 2, 1827.'

‘My dear —, “freely we have received, freely let us give.”¹ If it does take up half a day once or twice a month to go to —, surely God, who gave all your days, has a right to expect you should spend them in whatever service he will put upon you; and by making these individuals your near relations, he has given them a claim upon you. Jesus made himself as our brother, that sucked the breasts of our mother, on purpose to give us an everlasting claim to all that he can do for us; and surely those whom he has given us as near relations, have for his sake a claim upon all that we can do for them. The more unpleasant the task, the more contrary to flesh and blood, the more reason we have to hope that we are not following our own fancy, nor working to please ourselves, but really following the example of Jesus, who “came not to do his own will.”² At the same time, if *after prayer*, you really do not feel called upon to do something for them, and that speedily and perseveringly; and if you do not think you are guilty of great unfaithfulness and selfishness in neglecting it, I will not mention the subject again to you; for I am persuaded you will be taught of God, and faith will be given you, if the Lord intends to make use of you to do them good. My great desire is, that we may be always faithful to one another, “provoking one another to good works.”³

In another letter to the same correspondent, she throws out a valuable hint of encouragement relative to a difficulty, which is often painfully felt in this course of obligation.

‘I often think, dear —, that if we could feel and carry in our memory those encouraging words of our Saviour, “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you,”³— we should no longer suffer false shame to hinder us from earnestly pressing the subject of the Gospel upon those who are dear to us. May not we, as well as the inspired apostles, hope for the indwelling guidance of that Spirit, who shall strengthen us in all utterance and in knowledge?’

One main feature of *her intellectual character* was the ardor, steadiness, and concentration of mind, with which she pursued every

¹ Matt. x. 8.

² John vi. 38. Compare Romans xv. 3—the example of the only being in the universe, who had a right to please Himself, and yet who, in relinquishing this right, exhibits Himself as our Pattern no less than our Sacrifice.

³ Matthew x. 20.

object of interest. This indeed distinguished her earliest and most unbended habits. Her youthful games were marked with the same intensity of feeling, which she subsequently applied to her more important objects. She engaged in games of imagination, as one of her companions remarks, with all the earnestness of reality, and acted a fictitious character with an expression, that proved her to be totally absorbed in it. Thus it was with reading or with work. No efforts or entreaties could avail to divert her mind from the object which was then engaging her attention, to any other employment or recreation. In the occupations of after-life, whether it was music, the languages, mathematics, or chemistry, it was still the same warmth and fixedness of mind. The early dawn not unfrequently found her (after she had girded on her Christian armor) deeply engaged in her studies. The spirit and result of her investigations often entered into her common conversation, wherever she met with a kindred mind—not however in any display of pedantry, (than which nothing was more removed from her temper,) but in the natural flow of her spirits, and with a lively endeavor to communicate a reciprocal interest. The simplicity and elastic spring of her mind was also remarkably illustrated in her peculiar faculty of drawing out the mental resources of those with whom she conversed; so that, though they could not but be sensible of her great superiority, yet they appeared to themselves often to possess a greater strength of mind, and variety of conception, than they had before been conscious of. Perhaps however the completeness of her intellectual character appeared in the well-regulated application of her mental powers. To subjects of taste—such as music and poetry—she brought a glow of feeling and of imagination, that quickens the pulse of her readers, and plays upon the passions with an irresistible charm. On the other hand, matters of a graver cast, such as the highly valuable discussions of her mathematical manuscript, are drawn out with the sober accuracy of a reflecting and discriminating judgment. The illustrations that have been given of her musical excitement might almost lead us to suppose that this was the atmosphere in which she lived, and that she could breathe in no other; yet was this fervid enthusiasm disciplined by the apprehension of the preponderance of this indulgent taste above more solid pursuits.¹ Thus was her fine imagination furnished with a proportionate counterpoise in the master-principle of her ever active mind.

As to her Christian character—this highest style of man—that energy of feeling and industry of habit which gave the impulse to her intellectual studies, no less strongly marked the temperament of her religion. Though she had a clear perception that the blessing she sought was a free gift, yet she expected the attainment of it, like that of every important object of pursuit, only in the constant use of the appointed means. She was therefore led to cherish the

¹ See pp. 40, 135.

principles of her Christian profession, in a spirit of earnest and prayerful searching of the Scriptures; and thus was she enabled to exhibit the graces of the Gospel in lovely combination and practical exercise.

In giving, however, a detailed sketch of Miss Graham's spiritual character, we would premise, that it was marked by that variation of feeling, which is so often alluded to in her correspondence,¹ and which, though common to all cases of Christian experience, her remarkable elevation of spirituality rendered more visible than in most other cases. The difference of her feelings was often discernible in her countenance. On some seasons it was irradiated with a peculiar expression of heavenly feature. She was manifestly filled with the love of God, and "out of the abundance of her heart her mouth would speak." At other times it was with difficulty that she could be induced to converse upon religious subjects; and she would turn from them to enter upon topics exclusively intellectual. But this view of her character cannot better be described than in the language of her most intimate and confidential friend.

"I did not notice any infirmity in her Christian character, except the one she herself often mentions—*inequality*. The difference in spiritual feeling was more visible in her than in any other Christian I have known. When in a state of warm feeling, she was more entirely engrossed by the subject than any one I ever met with. Nothing else could interest her. When her mind was less under the influence of heavenly things, the difference was obvious. I do not mean by her giving way to any sinful temper or feeling, but by her conversing with pleasure and interest upon merely earthly things. Nor do I think that at these times she sunk much, if at all, below the usual standard. Ordinarily she rose, I should think, above it."

The general tone, however, of her habit, both contemplative and active, manifested the habitual operation of a high measure of Divine influence; while her occasional depressions seem not to have sunk her below the ordinary level, and were doubtless connected with those exercises of humiliation described in her correspondence, which will find their response in the hearts of many of her readers.

We now proceed to the chief object of this work, a detailed development of the most prominent feature of Miss Graham's Christian character.

In a compassionate concern for the unconverted, she had deeply imbibed the spirit of her beloved Master. 'I see,' as she writes to a friend, 'more need than ever to pray, not only for the souls of others, but for a spirit of love to souls, and for a sense of their inestimable value.' She had diligently improved the opportunities of her health, in pleading with the careless and unbelieving, and in every exercise of tender anxiety on their behalf. In the chamber of pain and sickness, their awful condition intensely occupied her mind; and the

¹ See her letter, p. 109.

long and "wearisome nights appointed" her, were often engaged in intercession for their souls.

"When first I visited her"—observed the dear brother, who was the privileged attendant upon her sick bed—"hearing of a poor woman in a dangerous state, and unconcerned about her eternal interests, she eagerly inquired of me respecting her soul, and begged me most earnestly to pray for her. She spoke with a peculiar interest, as if she felt what it was for a soul to be lost." Indeed her minister expresses himself to have been continually struck with her deep tone of anxiety on the state of the parish. If she heard of any that were awakened from a fearful state of stupidity and death, it was always with the most lively expressions of delight. Often was she known to shed tears of joy upon any symptom of hope and encouragement respecting them that were brought before her. She felt the responsibility of every opportunity of addressing her fellow-sinners, whether rich or poor, upon the immensely momentous concerns of eternity; and when unable to seek after them, she longed to bring them into her sick room, within the reach of her solemn and affectionate exhortations; though a restless night was the expected result of this ardent excitement. It was her great desire to bring her whole family, all her friends and neighbors, to Christ and to heaven with her. Though suffering under excruciating pain, and her "soul breaking out with longing desires" for a sight of Christ in his glory: yet, when speaking of the perishing state of sinners, she would say—"Oh! I would gladly live a hundred years, if I might be the means of saving one soul." Shortly before her death, when in a state of great exhaustion, she begged her minister to pray for an infidel, who had an opportunity of seeing her 'Test of Truth,' as it passed through the press—"Weak as the work is"—she said in her deep humility—"it may prove a blessing to his soul."

A few extracts from her correspondence will afford striking illustration of the deep feeling of her Christian responsibility and love. The first letter relates to an unhappy female, who had been brought under her notice. Being unable personally to attend to her case, she thus warmly enforces it upon her friend, who was, jointly with herself, interested in it.

"Dec. 18, 1827.

"My chief reason for writing to-day is, that this poor wretched girl dwells upon my mind. You make good reflections, but these very reflections ought to lead us to do something for her. She must be very young; and if we do not make an effort to save her from destruction, I think that we shall indeed have much to answer for. Her not belonging to us, ought to be no excuse for our not concerning ourselves about her. For does she not belong to the large family of lost sinners, to which we once belonged? And may we not be the means of removing her thence into the family of saved sinners, of which God's mercy has made us members? I cannot rest till something is tried. So young, and so brought up,

what better could be expected from her? What should we have been under her disadvantages? I tremble even to think of it; and for very thankfulness we ought to leave nothing untried to save her. She has been also brought under our notice by a peculiar providence, which is, I think, a call to the work.'

To this wretched object of distress, she addressed a letter full of tender and awakening exhortations. To her great concern, however, this messenger of mercy never reached the hands of her for whom it was intended, and who was soon afterwards transported. Shortly afterwards she again stimulates her friend to this work of love, with the solemn impulse connected with the concerns of a never-dying soul.

'Jan. 11, 1828.

'I beseech you to reflect, that on one hand this girl may be a subject of regret to you upon your bed of death. On the other hand, she may be to you a "crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus."

The fervor that pervades the following letter is deeply affecting.

'March 18, 1828.

'But why should I say I have nothing to write about? I am really ashamed of the folly of the last sentence, and of the frivolous temper which dictated it. Yes, my dear friend, if we love the Lord Jesus, we have always a subject of the deepest interest—enough to employ our tongue and our pen, both morning, noon, and night. I would fain make him the subject of our communication here, as I trust he will be the theme of our songs and praises in heaven; and firmly believing, as I do, that there is neither praise nor lasting joy for those who place their happiness in anything short of loving him; can I do otherwise than tell you how very earnestly I wish that you may be led by his grace to make him your all in all? May his Holy Spirit lead us, my dear M——; for, in short, all are sinners, by nature as well as by practice, altogether alienated from God, to whom we can only be "made nigh by the blood of Jesus."¹ Do not let us deceive ourselves in so important a subject. If we are walking in the same way with the world around us, we are not walking in the narrow way which leads to life; nor can we be the followers of that Saviour, "who gave himself for us, that He might deliver us from this evil world."² There is a peace which the world knoweth not of, and a joy, in which all its boasted pleasures are but vanity. This is the peace and joy which I would entreat you to seek after. But you will say to me, 'Why do you recommend it? and why are you so uncharitable as to suppose I do not possess it already?' It is because I know what a great and entire change it requires in the whole heart and character. I am sensible that such is the utter sinfulness of my own heart, that nothing

¹ Eph. ii. 13.

² Gal. i. 4.

but a divine influence could have led me to see anything in Christ crucified that was worth giving up all the world for. And may not the same Divine power snatch you as a brand from the burning, and lead you to the cross of Jesus for pardon and salvation? This is the hope that induces me to venture upon writing to you so freely; and the very affectionate interest I feel in everything relating to you must plead my excuse, if, when I speak of a thing on which your eternity depends, I speak in the strong language which my anxiety suggests to me.'

Some misconception of her correspondent gave rise to the next letter.

' Your letter occasioned me much pain, and, I will add, perplexity. I could not conceive from what part of mine you had discovered that I thought holiness unnecessary to a Christian. My dear friend, I know (for God has said) that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."¹ but I know (for God has said it too), that we cannot be holy of ourselves: "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves;" and, "without me," saith Christ, "ye can do nothing."² As this is not a matter of little importance, but one of life and death, let me most earnestly and affectionately entreat you to make it the subject of unceasing prayer. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally." "Ask, and ye shall have."³ The Scripture abounds with promises to those who make it the business of their lives to seek God. Allow me to mention one more, which always fills my mind with comfort and peace:—"Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."⁴ I have mentioned this way of prayer to you, because I believe we might write about these things forever, without coming nearer to the truth. Prayer is the way of God's appointment; and I never knew anyone *who really prayed earnestly and perseveringly* for Divine teaching, that was not brought at length heartily to subscribe to what are called evangelical doctrines. The Scriptures take away all hope of our understanding these things of ourselves, when they tell us that the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him."⁵ Foolish indeed does the doctrine of the cross appear to the heart untaught by the Spirit of God; but let the heart be once taught to receive it, and it beholds in it "the power and wisdom of God;" and a person thus taught will feel constrained to make it his great desire, endeavor, and prayer that others may learn it too. Therefore if I could write volumes to you, the little word "pray" should be the burden of them all. By prayer I do not mean the cold thing which worldly people call prayer; I mean such an effort as a man

¹ Hebrews xii. 14.
⁴ Jer. xxix. 12, 13.

² 2 Cor. iii. 5. John xv. 5.

³ James i. 5 Matt. vii. 7.
⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

dying with hunger would use to beg for food ; I mean begging as for one's life, being able to say, as David did, "There is nothing in heaven or in earth that I desire beside thee."¹ Dear —, I feel that I have spoken to you with great freedom and plainness : I cannot help it. If I saw a friend on the brink of a precipice, I would try to pull her away from it. I know that all who trust in anything but Christ for pardon and salvation are on the brink of eternal destruction ; and can I rest when any whom I love are in this state ? I know, too, that unless God is pleased to bless what I have said, you will only think me a fool for my pains ; but this is of little consequence. Before another letter can pass between us, one or both of us may have entered into eternity, when every man's foundation that he trusted in will be tried ; and it will be seen how miserably mistaken are those who build upon the sand, upon their own imperfect righteousness : while those alone who built upon the Rock of Ages will be safe. May you be one of those ! may you flee for refuge to Christ Jesus ! trust him for everything, follow him in everything ; take him alone for your guide and teacher, and cease to "lean unto your own understanding."

The next letter contains a faithful and affectionate appeal made to a beloved relative under affliction. It cannot fail of interesting the reader, as a specimen of that natural affection, which we have before noticed² under the constraining influence of the principles of the Gospel.

‘Nov. 26, 1829.

‘How very sorry your letter has made us ! I can conceive nothing more heart-breaking, than the situation you are now all in. I entreat you most earnestly, my dearest —, to seek comfort in earnest prayer, for your dear afflicted —, and to try, by every means in your power, to lead him to the same source of comfort. I know he cannot now bear to have much said to him ; but a verse occasionally read to him, or a short and affectionate prayer offered up with him, might be blessed by our merciful God to his eternal good. I will endeavor to join my prayers with yours ; if it should please God to lead him to the source of all peace, you may one day look back with joy upon this affliction. May it lead you all to flee more earnestly for refuge to the hope that is set before you ! Tell my dear —, with my most affectionate love, that I beseech him to think of, and to pray over these words—“Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”³ Surely he may look upon this invitation as peculiarly addressed to himself. If ever there was one weary and heavy laden in mind and body, it is —. O let me implore him to accept the offer which infinite mercy holds out to him : let him cast his weary soul upon the love of Jesus ; let him take all his sins and sorrows, and spread them at the feet of one who is willing to forgive, mighty to save, a

¹ Psalm lxxiii. 25.

² Page 146.

³ Matthew xi. 28.

present help in every time of trouble, to every one without exception, who is willing to be forgiven, helped, saved, and abundantly comforted with the comfort which springs from his love, and which is, like himself, infinite and eternal.

O my dear —, with whom I have enjoyed so many happy hours, which will never fade from my memory; from whom I have received such repeated acts of kindness; and whom I love more as a parent than any other relation, suffer me to speak very earnestly to you; and take my words, I entreat you, as kindly and affectionately as they are meant. I cannot but long and pray, that you may “be comforted with the consolation, wherewith I myself have been comforted of God.” I have tried it, dearest —: and I have tried the comfort which the world has to give; and I have found the one deep, and satisfactory, and lasting, and the other vain, and empty, and transitory. You are, as I am, a sinner, a miserable sinner; and unless you flee to Jesus for refuge, you cannot escape the wrath of God, which is revealed against all sin. You have lived in the neglect of these things, and have cared too little what would become of your soul. But is this any reason for despair, or even for discouragement? Oh! no. Christ still *invites*—nay, even *beseeches*—you to come to him; and tells you in his word, that he is perfectly willing, and perfectly “able to save all that come unto God by him.” The greatness of our sins need not prevent us; for his “blood cleanseth from *all* sin;” he died for sinners, even the *chief* of sinners. Our ignorance need not dishearten us; for he “teacheth sinners in the way.” O come unto this “*meek and lowly*,” this *strong and mighty*, Saviour! He is too meek and gentle to reject, and too strong and faithful to disappoint any that come. Dear —, my heart is full. What can I say to induce you to seek peace and happiness in the pardon of your sins through Jesus Christ? It is but asking you to be full of happiness and joy; for thus I know it will be with you, if you take the God of all comfort for your God. And do but think, how wonderful and unspeakable his condescension, in offering to be our God, and friend, and father; “forever and ever, our guide even until death;”¹ our “everlasting portion and reward.” Only think, how dreadful that he should be willing to save us, and we unwilling to give ourselves up to be saved and blessed by him! Can this be your case? It must not—it must not be so with you. You cannot reject the invitations of the Gospel, and say to God, who *beseeches* you to be reconciled to him—‘No—I will not be reconciled; I will not pray to the God of my salvation.’ I am sure the thought strikes you with horror. You cannot rightly seek God without the aid of the Holy Spirit: but you will receive this aid upon asking; for “God will give his Holy Spirit to *them that ask him.*”² May he both teach you to pray, and hear and answer your prayer! May he relieve your suffering body, if it be his will,

¹ Psalm xlvi. 14.

² Luke xi. 13.

and comfort your distressed soul! Amen and Amen.—If my dear — can bear thus much read to him, you will show it, or read it to him; and let us both pray, that he may know and feel the joy of being united to Christ.'

To another friend she wrote from her sick bed, nearly in the same strain.

'I lie here sometimes, and think what a poor useless creature I am. But if I might be made the happy means of inducing my dear and kind friend to cast himself, and all his sorrows, and sins, and uneasiness, at the feet of the Saviour of sinners, then I should think I had indeed lived to some purpose. I have often wanted to write to you: but the fear that you would think me unkind or assuming in intruding my thoughts upon you, has prevented me. But what a foolish and wicked fear this was, when the salvation of your precious soul was in question! Yes, my dear —, I will frankly own to you, that the sickness of your body, distressing as it is to me, afflicts me not half so much as the sickness of your soul. I greatly fear that you have not yet found peace in the pardon of your sins through Jesus Christ. I write to you *as a sinner* saved by God's grace, *to a sinner*, whom the grace of God, and that alone, can save. I would not be so cruelly heartless as to flatter you, and to say, "Peace, peace, while there is no peace."¹ But I do know that there is pardon and peace too, for every one, who feeling his sins to be many and grievous, flies to Jesus Christ for refuge; and it is thus that I conjure you to fly to him.

'O my dear —, how long has this gracious Saviour been knocking at the door of your heart! By his Scriptures, which you have read; by the sermons and religious books that have come into your hands, by the secret strivings of his Spirit with your heart and conscience; by the afflictions wherewith He has afflicted, and still afflicts you; by all these things he knocks, he sues for admission. He will not let you rest till you open the door: and why? because he loves you: he would make you happy in this world, and happy forever. He would be to you a friend, on whom you might safely lean: on whose constant love you might safely confide; one who would never leave nor forsake you; never be weary of nor slight you; never for one moment be unable or unwilling to listen to you, bless you, and relieve you.

'Such a friend is Jesus Christ to all those who fly to him for salvation. May he be your friend and Saviour forever! this is the sincere prayer of,

M. J. G.'

The tenderness and consideration with which she enforced these supremely-important subjects upon her young friends, is noticed by those who were experimentally acquainted with it. Her gentleness and self-command were often put to the test by the coldness,

¹ Jeremiah vi. 14.

petulance, or dislike with which her exhortations were received. But there was no reproach or upbraiding on her part—no anger or contempt on account of the foolish things that were said; nor did she ever show the less interest in promoting amusements more after the heart of her companions. She was known sometimes to weep in tenderness, when a fault was confessed to her—but never at that time to reprove. Sometimes her humility and affectionate delicacy would rebuke the carelessness of her friend, by the acknowledgment of her own coldness and neglect. Thus she would lead her more thoughtless companion to unite with herself in supplication for pardon and grace. So truly was she “a fellow-worker with her God,” in “drawing with the bands of love!”¹

Connected with this was her *tender and Christian faithfulness in giving reproof*, where she considered it to be needed. To a beloved friend, complaining to her of a trial in the unjust suspicion of a relative, she exclaimed, ‘Oh, my dear friend, it is all self; examine yourself; see if that idol self is not at the bottom of all this feeling of yours.’ The result of self-inspection confirmed this judgment. The following is an instructive specimen of the mode and spirit, in which this high obligation of friendship will be most effectually discharged. After giving a slight sketch of some of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, she brings them home in a direct and close application to the conscience of her friend.

‘And now, beloved ——, let me turn from every other consideration to yourself, and the state of your own mind. For you have rightly judged that I cannot think that the state of your ——, or any other person, ought to have the least influence in preventing you from seeking the salvation of your own soul. The question is not, what *do others* do to be saved? But “what *must I* do to be saved?” You tell me that I am severe. Indeed I would not willingly be so. A miserable sinner myself, saved only by the free mercy of God, what right have I to be severe upon others? But I am “affectionately desirous of you” in the Lord Jesus, and therefore, as my beloved friend, I warn you. I fail in my duty to you, unless I tell you the truth. It may seem harsh to appear to have any doubt of your state; but it is kinder to lead you to examine now, than to leave you to the bare possibility of finding yourself deceived when it is too late. If then what I am now going to say should seem to you more severe than ever, I entreat you, dearest ——, to forgive me for the sake of the motive which impels me to do so. Consider that I am not now speaking of any trifling thing. The more I love you, the more impossible I find it to stand upon ceremony, while I am trembling for your soul. My fears then about your state are not excited by what I have heard. Had you become a very decided and devoted Christian, I think I should have heard of it from many quarters. In some it would have been noticed with delight; in others, with wonder: in others, with dislike and disap-

¹ Hosea xi. 4.

probation. But my fears are drawn chiefly from the querulous and worldly strain, in which most of your letters to me are written. I know that "if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his."¹ This Spirit must be known by its *fruits*. "And the fruits of the Spirit are *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.*"² Now I look earnestly, *anxiously*, for some of these fruits. I look for some sign that "the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to you." This love would show itself in love to others; in love even to your enemies, if you had any. But I fear you are indulging in feelings little short of hatred to more than one of your fellow-creatures. I fear that wrath, strife, disputations, envyings, jealousies, are too often more predominant in your heart than love. Again I look for some evidence of that "joy and peace in believing," that "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," which form so great a part of the "kingdom of God" within us.³ Even mourning Christians must *sometimes* feel a little of this in their hearts. But sure I am, that if "the peace of God which passeth all understanding, did keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus," you could not be so much fretted and discomposed by the petty discontents, and trials, and offences of a world, whose frowns and whose smiles you would feel to be equally beneath your regard. You would remember that your lot has been chosen for you by a wise and loving Father, and that the most vexatious events in it happen by his permission, and for your good. Whenever we feel inclined to murmur, dear —, at "our light afflictions," let us think of those faithful servants of God, who "had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments; who were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, who wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented."⁴ Yet these "destitute, afflicted, tormented" ones, "in patience possessed their souls." "The peace of God kept *their* hearts and minds;" and shall it not keep *ours*, in our comparatively no-sufferings? Now if these "fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace," flourish in the heart, they must show themselves to be there: and if the contrary dispositions—anger, dissatisfaction, restlessness, appear in their stead, it proves either that "we have not the Spirit of Christ, and therefore are none of his;" or else that we have "grieved that Holy Spirit," and caused him for a time to withdraw his sacred influences. In either case we ought not to rest till we have sought and obtained that "godly sorrow" for sin, "which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of."⁵ Where we may apply for this repentance, we are told in Acts v. 31. I will go on no longer in enumerating these fruits of the Spirit; for my business is not to judge you, but to lead you to judge and examine yourself. This I earnestly entreat you to do, "that you may not be judged of the Lord."⁶

¹ Rom. viii. 9.⁴ Heb. xi. 36, 37.² Gal. v. 22, 23.⁵ 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.³ Romans xv. 13; xvi. 17.⁶ 1 Cor. xi. 31.

And should you now, dearest —, feel offended with me, it will give me the less uneasiness—both because I know you will not in the end love me the less for having faithfully discharged my conscience towards you before I die; and because I know that you will view it in a very different light at our next meeting, which will, I hope and trust, be around the throne of God and the Lamb.'

Her love to her Saviour must have been already prominently remarked by every intelligent reader. She lived much in distinct, deep, and fixed contemplation of him. Those parts of Scripture were especially valuable, that brought her into closer contact with the subject nearest her heart—*the love of Christ*. The book of Canticles was therefore to her "a garden of delights." Her pure and spiritual mind enabled her to study this holy book with the liveliest and most profitable interest. Many Christians, in an over-scrupulous delicacy and unscriptural taste, seem almost to have proscribed this portion of the sacred canon from their private meditation. The book indeed is an exposition of the heavenly privilege of communion with our divine Saviour. It can only therefore be understood by those who can say—"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."¹ The perusal of it moreover must be admitted to require a peculiar abstraction from earthly things. But the Christian's heart under Divine teaching will be a spiritual interpreter of it; and whenever it is approached with reverence, simplicity and sanctity, it will tend much to the enkindling of holy affections in the endearing contemplation of descending love²—in a self-abasing sense of backslidings³—in a heavenly enjoyment of the presence of the Lord⁴—in commending his person to all around us⁵—in a panting desire for a closer communion with him⁶—and in a joyous anticipation of his coming.⁷

But Miss Graham's *love to her Saviour* was not confined to spiritual contemplation. It was a principle of incessant activity, directing her daily habit (to use her own beautiful language to one of her correspondents) to 'watch with the eye of love every intimation of his will, every leading of his Spirit.' Such is the difference between speculating upon religion, and feeling it—when the heart has "tasted that the Lord is gracious"—when the man is made "a new creature"—when his eyes have been opened to behold the beauty of his Saviour—and he is anxiously cultivating every temper of the Gospel, in which he may live above the world, and walk with Christ.

Miss Graham's happy anticipations of eternity were connected with this *love to her Saviour*. That which gave, in her eyes, emphasis and perfection to eternal bliss was—that it is all Christ—that the "Lamb is the light"⁸ of the heavenly city. Thus we find her writing a new year's congratulation to a dear friend in the heart-stirring remembrance—that "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."⁹

¹ 1 John i. 3.

² Cant. i. 1—4.

³ Ibid. v. 2—6.

⁴ Cant. ii. 3—13.

⁵ Ibid. v. ix. 16.

⁶ Ibid. viii. 6.

⁷ Cant. verse 14.

⁸ Rev. xxi. 23.

⁹ Rom. xiii. 11.

'Stoke, Jan. 1, 1827.'

‘This time last year we were together. Does it seem as if a year had passed since then? Another year of sin on our part, and of mercy, free and uninterrupted, on the part of *our* Jesus! There is something very sweet in the thought that we are a year nearer to his bosom; that every year will pass as swiftly as the last, till he calls us to himself; and that nothing can happen next year, or any following year, which can possibly separate us one single moment from his love. Perhaps this time next year we may be like him, “seeing him as he is,” joining in a song new indeed to our tongues, because it will be a triumphant song, and a holy and an everlasting song.’

Her love of prayer formed one of the main features of her character. Every habit of her mind appeared to flow in the spirit and atmosphere of prayer. The *playful exercises of her youth were indulged in this sanctified temperament.* When her cousin visited her, the day was usually commenced with a chapter from her favorite Bible, accompanied with prayer, that they might both love and serve Him, of whom that book testified. This service performed, she instantly turned all the warmth and animation of her affectionate temper, and all the powers of her highly-gifted mind, to the amusement of her companion. We have already noticed the *connection of this habit with her intellectual employments*, whether indulging her own gratifications, or superintending the instruction of her cousin.¹ Hers was not the unsanctified study, which is glitter, not gold. All was consecrated to the supreme object of life, and directed to this object by the constant influence of that principle, which ennobles earthly occupations, and stamps them with a heavenly glory. *The occasional visits of her young friends found her in the same spiritual habit.* ‘Seldom,’ as one of her school-fellows has recorded, ‘did I enter her little room, but she proposed the reading of the Bible, and would pour out her soul before her God with holy fervor and simplicity.’ *Her public exercises of Christian devotedness were conducted in the same spirit.* When engaged in the work of Sunday School tuition, she had her set times of prayer with her young cousin, who was at that time associated with her (for themselves, their fellow-laborers, and their responsible charge); and frequently she would offer distinct and separate supplication for each child in their classes. *Her responsibility as a member of the ransomed family of God, led her (as we find from a letter shortly to be adduced)² in the true spirit of sympathy to devote an hour every evening mainly to the subject of intercessory prayer.* Besides these constant occasions, *she set apart special time for secret dedication and communion with God.* New-year’s day and birth-days were among these privileged seasons. It was one of her favorite plans to set apart occasionally a certain time exclusively for prayer and scripture reading; and for

¹ See page 37.

² See page 183.

this purpose all her other employments were removed from her sight. This was her preparation for any special engagement that was prospectively before her ; and this course she recommended to her friends with beneficial effect.¹ Another custom of somewhat similar character (and one that is happily making advance throughout the church in our day) was to prevail upon her confidential friends to set apart definite hours, when distant friends could meet together in one heart and one soul at the throne of their common Lord. Thus in the most extensive meaning of the scriptural precept, she might be said to "pray without ceasing;" and, like the man after God's heart, "to give herself unto prayer."

Love to the whole word of God was also a prominent feature in her character. Indications of this holy pleasurable taste were visible in her childhood, in the large portions which she committed to memory.² In an early excursion with one of her young friends, we find her reproaching herself for the small proportion of time, which she had consecrated to the study of this precious volume. Whatever might be the ground for this self-accusation, it was however intended as a hint to her less thoughtful companion, and to introduce before her a plan that might be useful to them both—that of repeating portions of Scripture to each other when they met. Thus she made her own self-condemnation the vehicle of instruction to her friend. Generally speaking, she read the Sacred Book as a pleasure, not as a task. It seemed to be her constant food and study. She did, indeed, "esteem the words of God's mouth more than her necessary food."³ They "were found, and she did eat them; and they were to her as the joy and rejoicing of her heart."⁴ They were to her what Melancthon calls 'that sacred manna of the soul, to which St. Paul alludes, when he speaks of spiritually discerning' the sacred pages. Often under protracted bodily and spiritual trials, the promises were to her "as cold waters to a thirsty soul;" yea, as "life from the dead." So eager was her appetite for this heavenly manna, that, not satisfied with her own gathering, she was always longing to feed upon the fruits of the industry of her friends. Thus in one of her letters we find her entreating her confidential correspondent to communicate to her any additional and interesting light, which had been found in the course of her scriptural research. Even in those seasons of special consecration just alluded to, when she found her mind indisposed for spiritual reading, she would still cleave exclusively to the Scriptures, and give up her time and mind to learning large portions of this holy book. It was her practice to read through different books of scripture with a close and persevering habit of meditation and prayer, always keeping in mind her Master's stimulating motive to the

¹ See a reference to this plan in her letter, p. 47. In another letter she again alludes to it—"I have made a proposal to ——. I wish her to read a chapter in the Testament every day, beginning with the Gospel of St. Matthew. I will every day read the same chapter, and (God helping me) give some time to pray, that every verse may be explained and blessed to her. I hope much from this method.

¹ See p. 12.

² Job xxiii. 12.

³ Jer. xv. 16.

search—"For they are they which testify of me."¹ Hence she was delighted in the course of her study of the Book of Proverbs, to have Christ so much and so frequently brought before her mind;² a recollection of great moment for the spiritual discernment of the divine wisdom treasured up in this storehouse of practical instruction. The encouraging promise held out to diligent investigators of the sacred volume³ on one occasion fixed her in intense meditation for upwards of two hours. She appeared to be lost in astonishment and gratitude at the condescension and kindness of God, in giving a promise so rich, so free, so encouraging. She grasped it, as if determined not to let it go. She frequently employed herself in the profitable exercise of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual";⁴—Scripture with itself; thus making God his own interpreter. Much light and heavenly unction she conceived herself to have obtained by this means, which were manifested to others, unconsciously to herself, in her striking remarks, and apt illustrations of passages presented to her. The *wholeness* of her study already noticed⁵ is worthy of careful consideration. There was no exclusive regard or undue prominence given to portions of the sacred book. "All" was regarded as "given by inspiration of God," and therefore profitable for the specific purposes for which it was written, and which it is the exercise of prayer and diligence to investigate.

But we will state her admirable views of the temper requisite for the study of the Sacred Book in her own words.

'We shall never'—she remarks—'become perfectly reconciled to all parts of the word of God, until He himself bestows on us the spirit and temper of a little child, to receive, without murmuring or disputings or carnal reasonings, whatsoever *Jehovah the Spirit* is pleased to say to us. That Spirit alone can take away the evil heart of unbelief, which prevents us from embracing the *whole* counsel of God as revealed in his word. It is he that must open our hearts to attend to *all* the things written in his law. *Then* we shall perceive a connection and a harmony between every part and every doctrine of the Scriptures, which will fill us with ever-increasing wonder and delight.'⁶

Her child-like simplicity was the spirit of the most profound reverence. It is most edifying to remark her humble adoring search into "the deep things of God," as contrasted with the unhallowed boldness with which these unfathomable depths are too often explored. After noticing objections to her views of the doctrine of election, she checks herself—

'But I stop; "he that reproveth God, let him answer it."⁷ All these mysteries can be accounted for only by referring them to the inscrutable mystery of God's predestination. To the eye of carnal reason they lie involved in the thickest obscurity; but the eye of faith sees in them no darkness at all. For faith, instead of vainly

¹ John v. 39.

² See Chap. i. viii. ix. &c.

³ Prov. ii. 1—6.

⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

⁵ See her letter, p. 97.

⁶ Freeness of Grace, p. 55.

⁷ Job. xi. 2.

striving to pull these things down to the level of reason, soars far above reason ; resolves every difficulty into the *gracious will* or *wise permission* of God, and *seeks to know no further*. How many things are there which I know not, nor “can by” any “searching find out to perfection !” But *Jesus knows them all*. With this assurance I sit down, fully satisfied He will teach them to me hereafter, as I am able to bear it. In the meantime “I will trust, and not be afraid.” All that my God says to me I will implicitly believe, for I know that “every word of God is pure.” “All the words of his mouth are in righteousness ; there is nothing froward or perverse in them : they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.”¹ When I come to see God as he is, and to “know even as also I am known,” I shall find that all these mysteries of his word and will were only ‘dark with excessive light.’ In the meantime, till I have the eagle eye that can gaze undazzled at his glories, I will view them at humble distance through the glass of faith, which he has given me for this purpose ; nor will I dare to repine, because I can only see them in a glass darkly.² Thus faith removes every objection, stills every murmur, and silences every doubtful thought.’

This “trembling at God’s word,” is the spirit which our Lord “delighteth to honor”³ with special manifestations of his favor. “The secret of the Lord is with them *that fear him* ; and he will show them his covenant.”⁴ This temper will stimulate to an earnest and diligent search ; while it will repress a presumptuous intrusion. It will lead to the reception of every truth upon this formal reason—*that it is the word of God*. Every truth, though it should not be considered of equal importance, must be regarded with equal reverence ; never forgetting that God is the Author of every particle of revelation. Therefore to reject *any one ‘jot or tittle of it’*—as Dr. Owen has excellently observed, ‘is a sufficient demonstration, that *no one jot or tittle of it* is received as it ought. Upon whatever this title and inscription is—‘The Word of Jehovah’—there must we stoop, and bow down our souls before it, and captivate our understandings to the obedience of faith.⁵

Her love for the ordinances of God is worthy of special remark. And this indeed is the pulse of the soul—not *attendance on them*, but *delight in them*—fellowship with the panting desires of the holy Psalmist, when he envied even the birds who inhabited the pinnacles of the temple, and the priests who were always employed in its service ; and for himself counted “a day spent in God’s courts better than a thousand” spent elsewhere.⁶ The house of God had been to her in the time of health “the gate of heaven.”⁷ In her time of affliction, ministers and ordinances were to her “wells of salvation,” from whence she “drew water with joy.”⁸ “Beautiful” in her eyes “were the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that

¹ Prov. xxx. 5; viii. 8, 9.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

³ Isaiah lxvi. 2.

⁴ Psalm xxv. 14.

⁵ Owen on Perseverance, chap. x.

⁶ Psalm lxxxiv.

⁷ Gen. xxviii. 17.

⁸ Isaiah xii. 3.

publisheth peace."¹ She loved the messengers of the Gospel "for their work's sake,"² and for their Master's sake.³ She always expressed the deepest anxiety to receive through them "a message from God" to her soul. '*Pray before, as well as after, your visit,*' was her solemn entreaty to her beloved minister.

We must not forget to mention *her "love to the brethren"*—that conscious and unequivocal mark of a transition "from death unto life."⁴ She longed to see, converse, and enjoy fellowship with all who bore the image of her Lord; and whether absent or present, she seemed to hold communion with them. Speaking of an absent friend, who appeared to enjoy a deep sense of 'the love of God upon her heart,' she said, 'I long to see her, that she may impart to me some spiritual gift.' On this subject she appears to have been drawn out with remarkable warmth and liveliness of Christian feeling in her correspondence with her friends. To one of them she wrote thus—'It is a great honor for us, who have been made partakers of the tempter's work, to be made partakers of the Saviour's—for us, who have been made a curse, to be made a blessing. But when I write to you in this way, it is not so much because I feel it, as because I want to feel it, and desire to be made the instrument of "stirring up this gift of God in you."

What reader but must long to imbibe the blessed spirit of the two following letters?

‘April 9, 1827.

‘I entreat you to think more of the privilege of intercession, and to make more use of it than ever. I find an indescribable delight in using these words, “Our Father,” and in praising, confessing, and praying for myself as one of this large family—in praying for myself as one of them, and in feeling their joys and sorrows as my own. And indeed if we wish above all things that the name of Jesus be glorified, is it not glorified in the spirituality of others as much as in our own? And if we wish to be one with Jesus, should we not be also one with his elect? Tell me your difficulties and necessities, that I may present them to Jesus with my own. I do not say this, because I think that I have the strength to do it. But Jesus, our God and our Lord (who is with me whilst I write, and who will be with you whilst you read this letter) has said to you and to me, “My grace is sufficient for you.” ‘O Lord Jesus! see what I have written, and show that I do not expect too much from thee. Cause every affection of ours to be absorbed in thee; and may all thy sheep love thee above all, and love one another as thou hast loved them! Say—Amen to this prayer. And if you wish to know what to ask for me, ask that a spirit of perfect love, “which seeketh not her own,” may be given me.’

¹ Isaiah. lli. 7.

² 1 Thess. v. 13.

³ Luke x. 16.

⁴ 1 John iii. 14.

Again, about a month after, to the same—

'May 5, 1827.

'I beseech you to seek earnestly "the communion of saints." This is the only progress I have made in the Divine life. I have received as a most precious and unmerited gift the power of feeling the things of the flock of Christ as if they were my own. You cannot imagine the happiness of this feeling. The means through which the Father has given it to me, has been the Lord's Prayer. I dedicate (not always, because I am so light and unstable, but generally) an hour every evening to prayer, and principally to intercession. I generally begin with the thanks due to God, for having made himself known to us as our Father, for all that he has done for every one of his sheep on that day. It is impossible for me to tell you the great delight of thus mixing myself up with the people of Christ, and of considering their benefits as my own. The thought which transports me the most, is that of how many souls have been perhaps this day joined to the church! how many succored under temptation! how many recovered from their backslidings! how many filled with consolation! how many transported by death into the bosom of Christ! It delights me much also to consider, that all the elect, who are not yet converted, have been and will be preserved till they are called by the Divine Spirit. I then try to pray for that sweet "we," and to think of the necessities of my Christian friends. Besides, I have a list of unconverted persons for whom I wish to pray. I do entreat you to study with prayer the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians. I am most anxious that you should enjoy this happiness; and if you ask, you will do so.'

In the next letter we find her mind exercised upon this interesting subject.

'It seemed to me when I last wrote to you, that the law of love to the brethren was engraven on my heart. But I feel little of it now. It was like writing on sand. Oh! that all the flock of Christ had more, very much more, of this law. Oh that thirteenth of Corinthians! Do read and pray over it. There is love—such love as we want—the whole law written in our hearts. I wish the Lord would give me to say something to stir you up to pray more for love; and then, when you are quite full of love, that he would make you the means of conveying it to me. I would have you pray over 1 John iv. 16—21, as well as 1 Cor. xiii. We must first "know and believe the love which God hath towards us." That will make us love.'

To another beloved friend she expresses herself with similar warmth and intensity.

"How shall I, who am so full of sin, think to say anything that may be useful to you, my dear friend? Yet perhaps "the comfort

wherewith I have been comforted of God," in trying to spread your sorrows before him, may be communicated to your soul, while I am telling you of it ; for blessed be Jesus—we are all one—members of the same body. "It is given us in behalf of Christ to suffer,"¹ and rejoice with one another. When I was trying to pray, I endeavored to think of a verse, which I might plead with God, and which might encourage myself. The Lord put this into my heart—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word—(*for us*;) that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, *that they also may be one in us.*"² But oh ! the comfort that filled my soul, when I thought that Jesus had lifted up this prayer for you long before you were born ! that he has had it in his heart for you (and for me too, and all God's people, who all need it as much) ever since ! and he is praying the same thing for us now ! and finally *that "the Father heareth him always"*³ Therefore, the Father has heard, does hear, and will hear, this most gracious petition, which the Lord Jesus offered in the midst of his disciples, and which God the Spirit brought to their remembrance for our encouragement—"that we all may be one, as he is one with the Father." Yes—and we all shall *be one*, though Satan and all his angels conspire to divide us. He can no more separate us from the love of one another, than he "can separate us from the love of Christ." Truly, we have fellowship one with another ; and "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."⁴ May you be enabled to use more boldness at the throne of grace, to "draw near in full assurance of faith," and claim what Jesus, *who cannot ask in vain*, has asked of the Father for you—a full and abiding enjoyment of that love to the brethren—that fellowship—that oneness with the saints, which is just as much yours as Christ is yours ! It is a part of your purchased possession ; and nothing can keep you out of your right, but your own want of faith to plead that right with a God, who is more ready to give than we to ask.'

Would that these enlivening sentiments of Christian love were universally diffused ! Our Lord's wonderful prayer⁵ on this subject is indeed, as Miss Graham observes, an answered prayer—that is—in its incipient and progressive results. Yet it is only a specimen of that intercession, with which he has pledged himself, that "for Zion's sake he will not hold his peace, and for Jerusalem's sake he will not rest," until his Father shall make his "Jerusalem a praise in the earth."⁶ The plenary blessing is yet in store for us. We want increased exertion and expectancy as a means of preparation for it. We want to change our indolent anticipation of this union perfected in heaven for the immediate personal exercises of faith, patience, forbearance, and humility, by which "our hearts may be knit together in love,"⁷ even in the midst of the incessant

¹ Phil. i. 29.

² John xvii. 20, 21.

³ Ibid xi. 42.

⁴ 1 John iii. 14.

⁵ John xvii. 21.

⁶ Isaiah lxii. 1, 7.

⁷ Col. ii. 1.

conflicts of the church ; and we shall then be ready to help each other's labors, and hail each other's success.

The present aspect of the church is indeed most afflicting. We would not narrow the necessary breach between the church and the world by any compromise of principle or of conscience. But how painful is it to "see the breaches of the city of David, that they are many!"¹ When will our Zion appear in "the perfection of beauty"—as "a city compact together?"² "For the divisions of" one tribe in Israel "there were great searchings of heart."³ How careful, therefore, ought the scrutiny to be, when the evil spirit appears to be spreading throughout the whole camp ! It is not an ideal prospect that we picture to our imagination—but that "good and pleasant sight" to behold of "brethren dwelling together in unity."⁴ Such was the church in her primitive glory, when "the whole multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul"⁵—when 'the church—as Chrysostom observes—'was a little heaven.'

The motives to attempt, as far as in us lies, the restoration of this glory to the church are most constraining—such as fellowship with the spirit and prayer of our glorious Head—his honor in the world exalted by this heavenly spectacle⁶—the Church in every part "edifying itself in love"⁷—the Christian profession established⁸—and the consoling privileges of the Gospel manifested and enjoyed.⁹

The strength to promote this union in the Church will be found in deep self-abasement and wrestling intercession with our God. Let us enter into the spirit of the earnest pleadings of the "man after God's heart" for his people. "O God, thou hast cast us off; thou hast scattered us : thou hast been displeased ; O turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the earth to tremble ; thou hast broken it ; heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh."¹⁰ Impossible that "the Lord should" long "be angry against the prayer of his people!"¹¹

The scriptural rules for maintaining this union are most simple and explicit. "Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing." "Him that is weak in the faith, receive"—not cast off. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."¹² These rules are enforced by the example, no less than by the authority of our gracious Head, and directed to the highest end—"Receive ye one another, as Christ also receiveth us, to the glory of God."¹³ Great indeed is the difficulty of holding conscientious differences in brotherly love. We are too apt to magnify the points of difference, while the due proportion of the points of agreement is somewhat obscured. We are more ready to dispute upon the points

¹ Isaiah xxii. 9.

² Psalm l. 2 ; cxxii. 3.

³ Judges v. 16.

⁵ Psalm cxxxiii. 1.

⁵ Acts iv. 32.

⁶ John xvii. 21.

⁷ Ephes. iv. 16.

⁸ Phil. i. 27.

⁹ Ibid. ii. 1, 2.

¹⁰ Psalm lx. 1, 2.

¹¹ Ibid. lxxx. 4.

¹² Phil. iii. 16. Rom. xvi. 1 ; xv. 1.

³ Rom. xv. 7.

of controversy, than to strengthen each other's faith and love upon the principles of the Gospel. Thus our inordinate love of our own opinions leads us to press them beyond their legitimate bounds, and even beyond our sober intention ; and from this defect of connecting humility and forbearance with faith, many schisms arise in the body.

Would that there were among us one heart and one purpose, to exalt our Divine Master—to let every name be lost in His—to desire no name to be great but His ! But the canker of the church is that party spirit—more or less common to all—which unites the several communities upon their own private grounds, instead of forming a rallying point for the whole body. A tame compromise of conscience is indeed greatly to be deprecated. Yet, unless private selfishness, (sometimes cloaking itself under the garb of conscience,) and party Shibboleths be merged in Christian love, no holy brotherly communion can exist. We do not expect brother to yield to brother, but each to submit his conscience to his great Head—each member to grow up into Him, and to recollect that he has some individual sentiment to forbear, from a considerate regard to the unity of the body. It seems to be forgotten that Divine truth in all its parts and connections is fully revealed to none—that the degrees of attainment in scriptural knowledge are indefinitely varied—that every difference in religion, is not a different religion—that there is a want of perfection and singleness in the clearest eye, that is an inlet for the partial introduction of darkness—and that all of us are more or less criminally warped by the school in which we have been trained, by the atmosphere in which we live, or by the difference of our own tempers and habits of thinking. Hence it is evident, that a sincere reception of the first principles of the Gospel lays a solid basis for mutual affection ; and that in lesser points “forbearing one another in love,” is the only effectual means of “keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”¹ Indeed, ‘substantial harmony, combined with circumstantial variety,’ (as Paley remarks of the evidence of testimony) is the only practicable catholicity ; and to attempt a more entire agreement in detail would be a certain breach in the concord of the universal church. Yet, though unity of opinion is impracticable, unity of faith is to be constantly aimed at ; and this may be consistent with a great diversity of individual character, and even with many shades of doctrinal differences.

But let us not be “ignorant of Satan’s devices.”² Too successfully does he succeed by division among the friends of Christ, to prevent the united assault upon his own kingdom. Let us descend from our lesser disputes to the field of the conflict between the great powers of light and darkness. Let us “come to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”³ The voice of God to his church is, “*Love the truth and peace.*”⁴ We love

¹ Ephesians iv. 2, 3.

³ Judges v. 23.

² 2 Cor. ii. 11.

⁴ Zech. viii. 19. Comp. Rom. xiv. 19.

neither, if we love not both. If in the professed cause of "truth" we tear the consciences of our brethren, and wound the "peace" of the church, perhaps we may expect one common storm, one uniting bond of suffering, to be the Lord's appointed means of humbling and chastising his church, and accomplishing his gracious purposes by the instruments of his loving correction.

CHAPTER VI.

HER ILLNESS AND DEATH.

THE period of her illness embraces a large portion of what in her case, as her father observes, ‘might not be untruly called, “that long disease—her life.”’ From her childhood, her health was very delicate; and the long illness which occasioned her leaving school, left a debility in her constitution, from which she suffered more or less to the end of life. Violent pains in her head, chest, and side, appeared however to be the commencement of that disease, which gradually developed a fatal character. For some years she was indeed able to exert herself, (too often much beyond her strength), both in bodily and mental activity. She continued her intellectual studies with her usual vigor, till about a year after her settlement in Devon; when increasing illness constrained her to send her young pupil to school, and she was never afterwards enabled, though she much wished it, to resume the care of her education. From that time she became a decided invalid; and except in the year 1827, (when she changed the scene for the benefit of her health,) she never moved beyond the garden, and only two or three times ventured into the outward air.¹ For the last two years she was entirely confined to her room, and unable to be dressed. During the whole of this period, her anxious mother slept in her chamber, watching over her with the most unremitting tenderness. She generally kept her bed, till within the last seven or eight months, when a violent cough, and spasms in the heart, prevented a reclining position, except when she was compelled to return to it by fainting and exhaustion. The only resource was a chair well supported with pillows, in which she sat up day and night, and from which the assistance of three persons was required to remove her during the last few weeks of her life. She appeared, however, to suffer less from debility than many invalids. For though she was wholly unable to stand, yet a change of medical regimen appeared to give her temporary relief from distressing helplessness.

In this state of wearisome languor and pain, her mind, however, was always vigorous and full of energy. She never seemed to know an idle moment. During the whole period of confinement to her bed, she was always surrounded with books, or other objects

¹ Of one of these times the following memorandum occurs in a letter to her cousin. ‘To-day, I know not how, all my illness seems to have disappeared, and I feel much better, so that I have been out in the garden the second time since you left me. Ah! how delightful the weather was; what pleasure I felt in breathing the fresh air, in seeing the trees which begin to bud, the spring flowers which are appearing, and in hearing the song of the birds, who seem to rejoice no less than myself in this season.’

that engaged her attention. It was her habit to have her table placed by her bed-side every night with her books and writing materials, that she might commence her operations with the earliest dawn of light. Her beloved Bible was always under her pillow, the first thing in her hand in the morning, and the last at night. Subordinate to this object of supreme interest, her diligence and perseverance in study were most remarkable. When reminded that such intense application must be injurious to her health, she always replied, that she considered these diversified sources of interest as amongst her greatest temporal blessings, in diverting her mind and attention from her bodily ailments. Her studies in the sick room were as varied as in the time of health. Sometimes the languages were taken up. At other times the more engrossing study of mathematics fixed her mind. This in its turn was exchanged for chemistry or botany. Occasionally, when her mind was less equal to exertion, she would amuse herself with lighter employments. In the spring of her last year, she attempted to dry flowers which her parents procured for her, with the intention of forming an herbarium. But increasing indisposition frustrated this plan. Cutting out paper was also a favorite amusement, in which she early excelled. Her skilful use of the scissors had attracted in her young days the admiration and interest of her school-fellows. She was also a beautiful netter, and sent a number of purses to her Spanish correspondent, which, when sold at a Bazaar for his private benefit, produced upwards of three pounds. Thus in these various employments did her mind maintain its ceaseless activity, both in intellectual indulgence, and in all the exercises of practical devotedness. No opportunity of usefulness appeared to be forgotten. When detained from the house of God by her protracted indisposition, her time and interest were employed in explaining the Scriptures to the servant who was necessarily occupied in attendance upon her; and in one instance it was hoped, as well as in a former case of much earlier date, that her simple and spiritual instructions in the household were applied with divine unction and sovereign grace to the heart.

As, however, her illness evidently approached its termination, her employments assumed a character more exclusively spiritual. She was occupied in girding up her loins, and trimming her lamp, in constant and delighted expectation of her Lord's immediate coming.¹

And now it was, that the Christian graces which had been matured in the school of affliction, and under the influence of habitual communion with her God, displayed more manifestly their holiness, beauty, and consolation. This was (as an excellent clergyman, before adverted to, wrote to her father,) the fiery chariot, her vehicle to heaven, in which—the more it shook her mortal frame, until it left it all behind—the stronger and more full of

¹ Luke xii. 35, 36.

faith and triumph in Christ Jesus, she grew in her immortal spirit.'

A detailed account of this last period of her mortal career will, it is presumed, be found generally interesting. In these solemn seasons is every feature more accurately defined ; while the coloring is heightened by the impressive manifestation of the love and faithfulness of our God and Saviour.

To the last, her habits of active employment were predominant. Her thoughts and time were much occupied in preparing her two small, but valuable works for publication ; and she continued to correct the proof sheets of them as they were sent to her till within a few days of her death. At first her mind was divided between the completion of her projected Series of Letters to a Governess ; and the work—On the Freeness of Divine Grace. But mature deliberation decided her in favor of the latter, as being calculated for more extensive usefulness. She was indefatigable also in her correspondence with her friends, upon the principle of duty, in using every opportunity of setting forth the grand and inviting subject of the Gospel to her fellow-sinners. She continued to write even after she was unable to use her pen, and when having had just power to direct a pencil, her wrist had been bound up to give her a little strength. The following extracts from her letters, during this solemn season of daily expectancy, mark the character of her mind. We select an illustration at some length of the intense anxiety with which she regarded the spiritual interest of those that were dear to her, and of the earnest, awakening, and yet encouraging application of the privileges of the Gospel, to fix them to an entire devotedness to their eternal concerns.

‘*Stoke Fleming, Sept. 28, 1830.*

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God !”¹ This love should be enough for us. Come pain, sickness, poverty, affliction ; and still the Christian must rejoice, when he considers “what manner of love the Father has bestowed on him.” Reconciled to God ; redeemed by Christ Jesus ; sanctified, taught, and comforted by the Spirit ; what is there in the world that can rob him of his joy ? “Who shall separate him from the love of Christ ?”² And as long as he has this love, how shall he not “rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory ?”³

“My dear —, I would stir up your heart to make this joy your joy. Oh that my God would give me words of power and persuasion, and send them by his Spirit to your heart ! “Awake thou that sleepest ;” awake, awake. Time is passing—eternity is at hand. Thou must soon receive a crown of glory, “or cover thyself with thine own confusion as with a mantle.” “Behold, now is the accepted time. Seek the Lord now while he may be found, call

¹ 1 John iii. 1.

² Rom viii. 35.

³ 1 Peter i. 8.

upon him *now* while he is near. Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you."¹ Oh let me remind you, not in a spirit of reproof, but of the most anxious, earnest affection, how long "the goodness of God has been leading you to repentance."² I believe it is now ten years, or nearly so, since we were confirmed together. Then you seemed resolved to make the Lord indeed your God; to be no longer "conformed to this world," but to "come out from the world and be separate;" to walk as "a stranger and pilgrim upon earth." Often since then have you appeared to be affected by the same feelings and desires. The time you spent with me here was marked by one blessed season, during which the word of God seemed to be your delight; prayer to God your chief comfort; and you expressed your entire renouncement of your own righteousness, and a simple trust in the atonement and righteousness of God your Saviour. Recall that precious time to your mind, my beloved friend. You were then beginning to be happy. Inquire how it was, that, instead of "going from strength to strength," from "glory to glory," "from faith to faith," you relapsed so soon into your old uncomfortable state of mind, and have since found so little comfort in religion. Remember that now, even now, Christ is willing to receive you, to give you strength and peace, grace and glory; that he is able to save to the uttermost, and *more* willing to give than you to ask, more ready to hear than you to pray. Consider what an awful thing it is, to go on, for many years, "halting between two opinions;" knowing your Lord's will and not doing it; visited by repeated convictions, yet those convictions producing no decided appearance of conversion. Consider all these things, and again I say unto you, Awake, awake! May God of his infinite goodness arouse you to a sense of the importance of eternal things! May he enable you to wait upon him in incessant and importunate prayer, till he has "blessed you," (as he is most willing to do,) "with all spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ!"

' When you come to die, all the trifles which now vex and disquiet you, will seem less than a drop of a bucket, than the small dust of the balance. But the concerns of your soul, of what immense importance will they appear! Why should they not now assume their real weight and value in your eyes? Death may either snatch you away suddenly, or be preceded by such violent illness, as to render you incapable of reflection. At such a time, how delightful will it be, to be able to lean upon Christ, as an *old* friend, not to seek him as a new one! Oh, my dear —, you **MUST** find time to die; why will you not find time to prepare for death? You must shortly be in heaven or in hell! must feel the happy consequence of being pardoned and accepted in Christ, or the dreadful consequence of remaining in a state of guilt and condemnation. "There is now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus—who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"—who "mind not the things of

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 2. Isaiah iv. 6. James iv. 8.

² Rom. ii. 4.

the flesh, but the things of the Spirit"—who "look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal"—who "live not to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again"—who have "their conversation, their treasure, their heart in Heaven."¹

"Examine yourself, my beloved —, whether you answer to this character. I can write no more now, but as long as I continue in the flesh, I hope I shall not cease from time to time to remind you of these things, to beseech you to give yourself to Christ."

"My health continues much as when — last wrote. I suffer much at night, as I can never lie down in bed, but am obliged to be propped upright in an easy chair. But they do not seem to consider me now in any immediate danger, and if no sudden attack takes place, they seem to expect that I shall live over the winter, or even some time longer. All this is very uncertain; but I hope that I am willing to wait, till my Saviour's time is come to call me home to himself. He doeth all things well; and I may truly say, that he has "made all my bed in my sickness." "His comforts delight my soul;" and "in the night his song is with me, and my prayer to the God of my life is"—"Precious Saviour! Tender Father! Thou will cast out none that come to thee."²

The following letter, written in the immediate prospect of eternity, is valuable, as an exhibition of those views of the Gospel, which will alone stay the soul in perfect peace at that awful juncture. It is salvation, rich, free, full, finished—not a matter of uncertainty, dependent upon our own efforts or righteousness; but ordained, wrought out, and applied by God—not connected with faith, repentance, and love, as our previous fitness for the reception of it; but including these graces as component parts of the inestimable gift, "afore prepared of God, that we should walk in them."³

"July 5, 1830.

"I find, my beloved friend, that in death no past good works, no holy endeavors or desires can give the least comfort, except as evidences that we have been accepted for Christ's sake. My sole confidence is—that I have cast my poor guilty soul entirely, and without reserve, on the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus; casting far from me every other hope. My good works—where are they? I can remember none. They are too poor to think of without the profoundest humiliation. My desires and endeavors—Oh, my dear friend, I feel I should insult my holy God, by even naming them. They are, indeed, "coverings too narrow for any one to wrap themselves in,"⁴ at the moment of entering into the presence of God. But my Saviour hath clothed me with his own perfect righteousness, and I wrap myself round in it with unspeakable feelings of security. I examine it on every side, and find it "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." I am not afraid in this my wedding gar-

¹ Rom. viii. 1, 5. ² Cor. iv. 18; v. 15. Phil. iii. 20. Matt. vi. 19—21.

² Eph. ii. 10.

³ Isaiah xxviii. 20.

ment, to appear even before the King of kings. I think I hear my Saviour perpetually saying to me—"Not for thy sake do I this, be it known unto thee; be ashamed and confounded for thine own ways."¹ A sinful worm. May Jehovah, my righteousness, my Tower and Strength, my Rock of defence, my Sun and my Shield, my complete Salvation—Oh may he be your God and Guide, forever and ever!

She was usually favored throughout the last months of her life with a remarkable sense of the divine presence. During times of extreme agony, 'Christ,' she said, 'is with me, "touched with the feeling of mine infirmities."² Her intercourse with God at this solemn season, while it was most intimate, was yet *most hallowed*. One evening, after a day of great bodily suffering, her cousin went into her chamber to take leave of her for the night. The room was darkened, and perfectly quiet; and the state of her soul seemed to accord with the outer tranquillity. She said—'I can scarcely speak to you. The sense I have of the presence of God is so powerful, that it almost overcomes me. He has often manifested himself to me; but never in such a manner as this night. Indeed I feel ready to exclaim with Job—"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee."³ She said very little more, being evidently too deeply impressed to converse; 'but'—her cousin adds—'I shall never forget that night.'

Yet this sacredness of feeling was mingled with *cheerful delight*. It was truly Hooker's 'reverend gayety'⁴—'Oh!—said she one day to a friend—'he gives me to speak to him "face to face;" and sometimes, when I am so weak that I cannot utter words, his "Spirit helpeth my infirmities, and maketh intercession for me with groanings that cannot be uttered."⁵ I love to feel my weakness, that I may experience "his strength made perfect in weakness."⁶ *I delight to lie low before him.*'

She loved to speak of the character of God. Her mind appeared to be much expanded in the contemplation of his unsearchable nature and glorious perfections. 'How delightful'—she observed on one occasion—to think, that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."⁷ All his dispensations are light; and though now they seem dark to us, hereafter all clouds will be dispelled.⁸

Her desires for a clear and full knowledge of God were most intense. 'What'—she exclaimed one day,—'are ten thousand worlds compared with one ray of the knowledge of God?' The ardor of her soul, unsatisfied with former manifestations, was continually stretched out for higher and deeper views of the divine glory. She was not afraid to offer that prayer, which seems scarcely befitting an archangel's lips, and which only the clear warrant of the Gospel preserves from the stamp of presumption. "I beseech thee; show me thy glory."⁹ Often did she entreat her minister to pray,

¹ Ezek. xxvi. 32.

² Heb. iv. 15.

³ Job xlii. 5.

⁴ See Isaac Walton's Life.

⁵ Rom. viii. 26.

⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

⁷ 1 John i. 5.

⁸ See John xiii. 7. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

⁹ Ex. xxxiii. 18.

that more might be revealed to her in this world. Nor was the petition unheard. For, in reply to her dear mother's question a day or two before her death, her answer was—‘I could not feel happier.’

The concentration of all her thoughts upon eternity was peculiarly striking and edifying to those around her. This main concern for the last few months of her life absorbed her entire interest. Nothing unconnected with it seemed to possess any claim upon her attention. The engrossing delights of intellectual study were relinquished forever. She had no enjoyment of any train of conversation, except that which directly led her mind and contemplation heavenward. Communion with God was the one object of her desire. The word of God now occupied her whole attention. All other books—even her favorite authors—Romaine, Leighton, Milner,—seemed comparatively uninteresting. This heavenly absorption of mind is finely depicted in the following short extract from one of her late letters to a friend.

‘*Stoke Fleming, Oct. 1, 1830.*

‘MY DEAR —,

‘Knowing that my life hangs upon a thread, I dare not delay answering your letter: I pray God to enable me to speak the truth to you in love, and to dispose you not to think me ‘your enemy, because I tell you the truth.’ But I *must*, as long as I continue to live, continue to urge you on the subject of religion. I speak not now willingly on any other subject; I desire to have no more to do with earthly things, but to turn my whole joyful expectation to that blessed Saviour, whom I believe I shall soon see face to face, through that infinite, undeserved love and kindness of his, which has taught me to put my whole trust in him for salvation.’

Connected with this feature, we may add, that *she seemed so perfectly weaned from the world as scarcely to have an earthly wish.* Several times she took leave of her beloved relatives. In parting with her young cousin about three months before her death, she writes—‘I have not one earthly care or wish; for even my cares for her are now all cast upon God, whose tender love will, I trust, lead her all her life long, as it has led me. She is going one way, and I shall soon depart in another way; but I would wait patiently.’ One day earnestly recommending a friend to “cast all her care upon God”—she gave the same expression of her mind—‘*I have no earthly cares—no earthly wish.* But’—added she—‘I have spiritual cares—spiritual wants; but I cast even them all upon God.’ Christ and eternity filled up the whole vacuum, and left nothing else to be desired.

Resignation to the will of God was prominently marked during her illness, and was to her the source of much heavenly enjoyment. After meditating upon her Saviour’s words—“My meat is *to do* the will of him that sent me,”¹—she observed,—‘Though *I cannot*

¹ John iv. 34.

now do the will of my heavenly Father, I can suffer his will. She looked forward with great calmness to a protracted life of suffering, when the medical attendant gave his judgment, that she might probably live for many years, but would never regain her health. As she was naturally of an energetic disposition, ardent in forming and executing her plans, this state of acquiescence to so inactive a life appeared manifestly to be the effect of divine grace. Once indeed she remarked with tears, that the prospect of lying on that bed for many years—of seeing her friends die around her, and those whom she loved remove away (alluding to the anticipated removal of the rector's family, which, however, she did not live to see) was a melancholy thought. But the passing cloud was soon dissipated, and she regained her usual cheerfulness.

The same warm temper of love to the Lord's people that had distinguished her general profession was ruling to the last. Even in her state of distressing weakness, she could not be satisfied without seeing some of them around her bed, that she might enjoy sensible communion with them. However weak they might be in faith, or low in condition, her heart was fervently drawn out in union with them. In referring to some refreshing intercourse with two eminent Christians—she observed—‘How good my gracious God is in thus sending his saints to commune with me upon those deep and precious things which now form my only consolation—my “joy and the rejoicing of my heart!”’ But—added she, acknowledging the supremacy of her heavenly Friend—‘after all, His presence is the only unfailing source of happiness. “With Him is the fountain of life; in his light shall we see light.”’¹

Her views of sin were deep. Her friend observing her one morning to look unusually disturbed, ventured to express her concern; when she remarked with a look that could not be forgotten—“*It is sin that hath made me so. I have passed such a night!*” The deep solemnity of her manner precluded any further inquiry. Yet it was afterwards discovered, that it was not her own sin, but that of a dear friend that had so acutely pierced her. Of herself she observed, on another occasion—‘Ever since I have known my sins to be pardoned, they have cost me a thousand times more distress than before. So awfully does the love of God, in pardoning, aggravate their guilt.

The expressions of her deep humility, were peculiarly striking during her illness. All her attainments in the Christian life were never thought of, but as dross and dung. Her sense of unprofitableness kept her low in the dust, while the recollections of faith, exercised in habitual application to the blood of her Redeemer, upheld her from despondency. When her minister ventured to express the advantage, which his own soul had derived from attendance upon her, she exclaimed with vehemence—‘How should *such a dead dog*² as I am be of any use?’ She sometimes seemed as if she

¹ Psalm xxxvi. 9.

² 2 Sam. xvi. 9.

could scarcely conceive the possibility of being the Lord's instrument for the good of his people, while at the same time she continued to employ her every power of body and mind in their service.

This *self-abasing apprehension was, however, combined with ardent gratitude to God as the author, and to her friends as the channel, of all her mercies.* Every attention, every act of kindness from her parents and nurses, excited the most lively emotions of thankfulness. Speaking one day of the kindness of her nurse, her minister observed,—‘But oh ! how kind, how much kinder *is Christ.*’ ‘Yes—she replied—‘but even all this kindness of the creature flows to me *through his love, his kindness.*’ Thus did all her earthly comforts receive a double relish—thus also were her bitterest trials sweetened by being traced up to their divine source, and by flowing into her soul through the delightful channel of the mediation of her Saviour.

The *same food that had nourished her throughout her journey, continued to supply strength and vigor for the last efforts.* Her Bible was more invaluable than ever to her. It was her constant practice before she went to rest, to repeat a text to her beloved mother, and to require one in return—assigning as a reason, that she might have them to think upon when she was gone.¹ She pursued the same habit of scriptural repetition with her affectionate cousin—the constant attendant upon the last months of her illness—adding to it the privilege of social prayer, except when attacks of illness prevented it. “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”²—was her favorite text to the last.

As in health, so especially in her last sickness, she had great delight in communion with the Holy Spirit. She used to address her prayers much to Him, thought much of his Personality, and found the contemplation of it most refreshing to her soul. She would often speak with comfort of her experience of his distinct influence upon her heart.

Hymns were also a source of much refreshment to her soul. She used to repeat many to herself, especially during the night, and was thankful to the last to have them repeated to her. The last that her cousin read to her two days before her death, was one by Madame de Fleury, beginning—

‘Ye angels, who stand round the throne,’ &c.

and Gambold’s beautiful hymn,

‘That I am thine, my Lord and God,’ &c.

was a great favorite. Cowper and Toplady also were a source of great delight to her.

¹ A few months before her death, she presented her little Bible to her mother, having obtained from her the assurance that she would read a chapter every day with prayer. In order to keep the promise in mind, if the precious treasure was at any time out of reach, she would playfully ask for it, ‘You know, dearest mother, it is not mine now, but do you lend it to me while I am here.’

² John xvi. 24

She expressed to her minister her strong desire to receive the sacrament, the mention of which had been refrained by her friends on account of her great weakness and sudden attacks of violent pain. She feared, however, that she had too long neglected it, and could not be satisfied without the refreshment of this holy ordinance. When speaking of it before the administration—she said—‘Oh ! I desire *a full communion*. I long to see as many as possible of the dear children of God to partake with me of this blessed ordinance.’ She expected, as she was justly warranted to do, a rich blessing in the fulfilment of the last command of her dying Lord. Nor was she disappointed. Twice she received the sacred emblems from the hands of the venerable rector of the parish (since departed to his rest); and in the following affecting letter, written in pencil with great difficulty immediately after one of these occasions, she expressed to him her grateful acknowledgment of the consolations which he had instrumentally imparted to her soul.

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘I thank you very affectionately for the comfort I have received to-day through your means. When I saw you, I regretted that I could not tell you so myself. But it is the Lord, who hath both dulled your power of hearing, and weakened my power of speaking; and he does it with both of us, to warn us gently, that these frail bodies must soon be quite taken to pieces, and lie till we are “clothed upon” with “a body like unto *His* glorious body.” It will give you pleasure to know, that, while you administered the bread and wine, I was enabled to cast my whole soul as a miserable sinner on the free mercies of Him, who died that we might live; and to rejoice in the thought of our meeting ere long, through the same free grace, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

‘I wished to write these few lines to explain my own feelings to you ; for my dear mamma, in her anxious love, so much fears my seeing one, to whom she thinks I could not talk without exertion, that I fear it had never been properly explained to you, that though I feel unable to talk to you, I should be most happy to listen to you.

‘Accept, my dear sir, the Christian love and thanks of your truly and gratefully attached

‘MARY GRAHAM.’

The support which was vouchsafed to her in the midst of her intense bodily suffering, was such as might have been expected from the known and tried faithfulness of her God. Such was her enjoyment at some seasons of agony—that her ‘pains,’ as she said on one occasion, “were sweeter than honey or the honeycomb.” At one of her times of distress she remarked—‘I am a child lying in the arms of Christ, and he treats me with more than a mother’s tenderness.’ Truly, indeed, was she “strengthened with all might,

according to the glorious power of God, unto all patience and long-suffering *with joyfulness.*¹

It is almost needless to add as the concluding article of detail—*that the sting of death was removed from her.*

'It is not death to me,'—she would say—'Jesus hath tasted death for me, and hath drunk up all its bitterness.' The prospect of eternity was entirely divested of its terrors, and beamed with the bright anticipation of everlasting joy. We may take the following glowing view of her hopes, given for the conviction of one of her young friends.

'Aug. 7, 1830.

'I am going to mention a sentence in your letter which grieved me; not as it regards myself, but as it leads me to fear, that you are not fully acquainted with those things, which can afford real and solid satisfaction on a near view of death. You speak of feeling satisfaction in death, as it affords a cessation from all pain. Dearest —, did you remember at the time, that death is something more than a cessation?—that it is an entrance into an eternal world, and that to those who "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," this is an entrance into eternal glory? Bear with me, while I tell you from my own actual experience, what it is that ransomed sinners rejoice in at the approach of death: I have stood lately more than once on the very brink of eternity, and thought myself on the point of taking the awful step. This makes heaven and earth, temporal and eternal things, appear in their strong and true point of contrast. And now that I am called back to the things of time for a little longer, if I can be of the least use to one of my fellow-sinners and sufferers here, I shall not regret the delay. It is not the cessation from pain, that can make Christians view the approach of death with satisfaction. For, believe me, they have not *one* pain too many. Not that they love pain, or are not glad to be freed from it, when the Lord pleases. But they know that every one of their sufferings is necessary and good for them, and that they come from the hand of a kind and tender Father. They are willing to bear as much pain as His love sees fit to inflict. Their pains are very sweet to them, as they come from Him. And, O dearest —, could you know how he "strengthens them upon the bed of languishing, and how he makes all their bed in their sickness;"² you would almost envy them even their pains, sweetened as they are by "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Wherein do they rejoice? In the hope of being "forever with the Lord!" of seeing him, "whom having not seen, they have loved; in whom, though now they see him not, yet, *believing*, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."³ Oh! to behold this "King in his beauty,"

¹ Colossians i. 11.

² Psalm xli. 3.

³ 1 Peter i. 8.

and beholding—to be transformed into his glorious likeness!¹ and then to cease from sin!—this, this is the blessed cessation after which real Christians pant. To love their holy and reconciled God without any coldness or unfaithfulness; to offend him no more by one unholy, or rebellious, or selfish, or unbelieving thought; to be pure as he is pure; to be “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;” and then to praise Him, to give him glory, and to cast our blood-bought crowns at his feet, through the countless ages of eternity! Pray, my beloved —, that in the hour of death you may be so filled with these causes of joy, that the mere escape from a few bodily pains may seem not worthy to be mentioned in the comparison. The Bible tells you, that “except *you be born again*, you cannot see the kingdom of God,” and that “if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is *a new creature, old things have passed away*, behold *all things are become new.*”² Examine, I beseech you, whether you have undergone that mighty change in all your views, tempers, and sentiments, which these expressions imply. If you die without being born again, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, I shall never meet you in heaven; for God, who cannot lie, hath said it. But pray, pray, oh pray to him, that he would thus convert your heart. He will hear and answer you. There is nothing else worth living for, but that, living or dying, you may be the Lord’s. May this be your happy case!

She would sometimes speak of herself as a disembodied spirit; as if she realized in the fullest perception and assurance, her entrance into the world of blessedness. Her frequent reference to her departure was in calm composure—like making preparation for a short journey, or a temporary absence. At other times it was in joyful hope. On one occasion—six months before her death—when she was thought to be dying, she unexpectedly revived, and, seeing her weeping friends around her, asked her dear mother why they were all in tears—adding with great animation—‘Do you think that I shall be with Jesus to-morrow?’ At another of these times, she exclaimed—‘If the Lord should come and take me this night—but, oh!—that is too much to hope for.’ After a violent attack of coughing and spasm, a friend observed—‘I fear you suffer much.’ ‘Oh, no!’—she replied—‘I delight to feel the pins of the tabernacle taking out.’ She burst into tears, when a physician who occasionally saw her, informed her, that the disease had not made the progress which he had supposed. This, however, was but a momentary feeling. For, upon her mother’s reminding her—that she was only not quite so near home as she had expected, she replied—‘Oh, no! this is wrong;’ dried up her tears, and returned to her usual serenity and cheerfulness. Writing to one of her friends in reference to a beloved saint, who had died in the triumph of the Gospel, she remarked—‘Well; I shall have one friend more to welcome me,

¹ Isaiah xxxiii. 17. 1 John iii. 2.

² John iii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17.

when the Lord's time shall come to "administer" to me also "an entrance into his everlasting kingdom." "Oh, blessed hope! happy sinners! saved by the blood of Jesus." Then she adds this affectionate exhortation, 'Oh, my dear, my beloved friend, I charge you so to devote yourself to the Lord, that "the full assurance of hope" may cheer you now, and at the hour of death.' Upon receiving the intelligence of the sudden death of another Christian friend, she exclaimed—'I have heard the good news. She has rent the veil at once. Mine is taking down piece by piece. By and by I shall find a chink large enough to get out of; like a bird confined in a cage, and fluttering about to extricate itself in vain, till at last the door being open, the happy prisoner wings its flight towards heaven.' There might probably be an occasional mixture of infirmity in these intense desires for her home. It is indeed the dictate of Christian wisdom to prefer the gain of death. But it is equally the part of Christian obedience to embrace the service of life; and the desire to depart, so far as it is not subjugated to the readiness to wait, partakes of the nature of self-will more than of holy affections. Generally, however, the ardency of her desires appeared to be subdued to a resignation to the Divine will. Thus in reference to her dissolution she writes to the aged minister, who, during her residence in London, had been the means of communicating established peace to her soul—'Blessed be my all-sufficient Saviour, that, accepted in Him, a few months more or less can make no great difference: "Neither life nor death can separate us from his love."¹ On one occasion, after expressing her earnest longing to depart, she checked herself and added—*But I am willing to sit here a hundred or a thousand years, if it be the will of God.*

Her mind maintained its vigorous character in the midst of her protracted sufferings. The subjects of her conversation were usually of a highly interesting character. She would often speak with considerable clearness, combined with deep humility, of the more mysterious parts of revelation, such as the distinct Persons of the Holy Trinity; the person and glory of Christ: the ministry of angels; the state of separate spirits; the prospects of the Church of Christ. It is much to be regretted that no particular details of these conversations are preserved. The resurrection and future glory of the body were favorite subjects with her. She delighted to dwell upon 1 Cor. xv. 'What a wonderful change'—she observed on one occasion—'takes place in nature in the acorn, which from so small and insignificant a seed afterwards expands and grows into a noble tree, the glory of the forest! What a remarkable transformation also is that of the caterpillar, which, after having been changed into apparently dead matter, at the appointed time bursts its shell, and becomes a beautiful winged insect! Had we not witnessed such changes, we should not have believed them possible. But having seen them in nature, shall we doubt the possibility of that

¹ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

great change, which will take place at the resurrection day, when "this vile body shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body" of our Lord ?¹

For a short time, however, before her death, the enemy was permitted to harass her soul, and her lively apprehensions of the Gospel were occasionally obscured. At one of these times she said to her minister, 'Christ is not so precious to me as he deserves.' 'No,' —it was replied—'he is so to none.' 'But'—she added—'he "feeds me with food convenient for me," though I do not experience those spiritual enjoyments I so ardently long for.' Of a distressing season of temptation which happened about this time, her minister writes —'I shall never forget the state of her mind. It seemed as if "a horror of great darkness had fallen upon her."² 'Oh'—she said—'I cannot pray; I can only utter words. It is mere wind.' She earnestly called upon me to strengthen her, by repeating the promises of the Gospel. God at that time seemed to give me words. For when I scarcely knew what to say, words of effectual consolation were put into my mouth. Once in her impatience to hear the word, she exclaimed—'Oh, say something to me from God—whether a word of comfort or reproof.' I think of that proverb—"The full soul loatheth the honeycomb; *but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.*"³ At these times of "needful heaviness, through manifold temptations," while "walking in darkness, and having no light," she was, however, manifestly enabled to "trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay upon her God."⁴ She could not enjoy the full manifestation of her God, which she had known in times past —' Yet though'—she said—'I cannot love God with that warmth which I so earnestly desire, I can act faith upon Him.' She complained much of deadness in prayer. Yet, her faith was in exercise, upholding her soul upon the sure word of promise, that her Lord would return to her in his own best time. She would at such seasons cheer her soul, by repeating suitable promises. "When the poor and needy seek for water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth them for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Jacob will not forsake them."⁵ On this encouraging promise she rested in one of her seasons of distress and desertion. At another time she would say—"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me."⁶ And again—"The Lord my God shall enlighten my darkness."⁷ At these times of trial, the book of Canticles was much upon her mind. "By night I sought my Beloved, but I found him not." Then she added—"but I sought not in vain." She appeared to be at this time much enlivened in speaking of her Saviour as represented under the figure of the bridegroom. 'He loves us to such a degree, that he seeks after us; he desires—he delights in us—all which is to be seen in this wonderful portion of

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

² Genesis xv. 12.

³ Prov. xxvii. 7.

⁴ 1 Peter i. 6, with Isaiah l. 10.

⁵ Isaiah xli. 17.

⁶ Micah vii. 8.

⁷ Psalm xviii. 28.

Scripture. At another of these times she remarked, that often in the experience of the Lord's servants, a season of darkness had preceded some special manifestation of his love. Thus, as she observed, 'Jacob wrestled *a whole night*; and it was not until the daybreak that the angel revealed himself.¹' Thus for a while our Lord seemed to disregard the cry of the Canaanitish woman; but the "trial of her faith was" eventually "found to praise, and honor, and glory."² Thus also the disconsolate state of the disciples in their journey to Emmaus was the prelude and harbinger of a blessed display of their Master's light and love.³

The dark clouds which "for a small moment"⁴ had been permitted to spread themselves over her soul, were, however, shortly dispelled; and "at evening time it was light."⁵ Her extreme weakness indeed prevented her utterance; but the few words that could be gathered from her, were descriptive of the peace and joy that reigned within. 'My weakness,' she said, 'reposes on his strength—my folly on his wisdom.' When her minister, in allusion to her late painful exercises, observed, 'God was "leading her *by the right way* to the city of habitation,"' she replied, 'Oh! yes—but how different is the case of those, who "wander in the wilderness in a solitary way, and *find no city to dwell in!*"'⁶ In the last visit of this beloved attendant, she said to him, 'God is the rock of my salvation.' Then speaking of her being detained in her earthly tabernacle, she added, 'It is a comfort to think that "Christ has the keys of death and hell."⁷ All is well. May God be with you during the remainder of your pilgrimage! I can only lie as an infant in the hands of God.'

Her bodily sufferings at the last period were most severe, arising from a complication of diseases. Her lungs, which had been supposed to be sound, were discovered after her death to have been fatally diseased. Her heart also was found to be enlarged. Her weakness and inability to recline for so many weeks, produced dropsy in her feet and legs. This was, however, from time to time relieved by incision. Her life terminated at last by a rapid mortification in one of her legs. The last day of her life was a day of intense agony. She was obliged to take doses of opium, which before she could not touch, so that the day and night, till she expired, were passed in a doze, or in the most violent suffering. A few words only were preserved at this affecting crisis. A day or two before her death, she cried, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; "nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."⁸' At another time, speaking of "the glory that shall be revealed," she exclaimed, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."⁹ Alluding to those who watched by her side, she said, 'What a comfort that we are not watching alone! "He that

¹ Canticles iii. 1. Genesis xxxii. 24, 25.

² Matthew xv. 22—28, with 1 Peter i. 7.

³ Luke xxiv. 17—34.

⁴ Isa. liv. 7.

⁵ Zech. xiv. 7.

⁶ Psalm cvii. 7, with 4.

⁷ Rev. i. 18.

⁸ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”¹ Then again, shortly after, “I know whom I have believed.”² Then again, in a moment of excruciating suffering, to her mother, ‘Pray for me, that my patience may not fail me at the last.’ The last words she was heard to utter before her death in a moment of deep agony, were, ‘I am come into deep waters ; O God my rock, “hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.”’ The next morning, on Friday, December 10, 1830, without a sigh or struggle, she entered into her eternal rest.

Thus upheld by the good hope of the Gospel—thus having displayed in lovely concord the diversified graces of the Christian profession—thus having been abundantly refreshed by the consolations of Christ—this blessed sufferer—this ransomed sinner—this victorious believer fell asleep in the arms of her Saviour and her God. She heard, and gladly obeyed the call of her Lord, “‘Come up hither.’ Lay down the cross, and take the crown.’

“TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, EVEN AS I ALSO OVERCAME, AND AM SET DOWN WITH MY FATHER IN HIS THRONE.”³

¹ Psalm cxi. 4.

² 2 Timothy i. 12.

³ Rev. iii. 21.

CHAPTER VII.

REMARKS.

THE writer, in bringing this interesting sketch to a close, ventures to crave further indulgence of his reader, in drawing out a few points of important and suitable application.

I. *The review of Miss Graham's painful, though temporary, apostasy marks the great moment of being well-grounded in the elementary principles of the Gospel.* A few hints may be here suggested to the inquiring and serious mind. First, *the danger of a cavilling temper.* Here lurks the first rising of the spirit of infidelity. Miss Graham's natural character was especially open to this temptation. Indeed, this is the fleshly indulgence of every intellectual mind undisciplined by the principles of the Gospel. It gratifies the love of distinction. It is the worship of self, that worst idol, that most subtle enemy of vital religion. “*Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt,*”¹ is the inspired and pointed illustration of the folly and littleness of this natural principle of the heart. Solid satisfaction and rest in the scriptural revelation will only be found in cultivating what Calvin wisely calls, ‘a kind of learned ignorance,’² a well-instructed contentment to be ignorant of what God has forborne to declare. But to begin with the speculative instead of the practical truths of revelation, and to insist upon an explanation of its difficulties, as a pre-requisite to the acknowledgment of its authority, and personal application of its truths—this spirit resists faith, the appointed medium of divine light; and thus gives to infidelity all its force, and leaves the heart the unconscious victim of its own delusions. The more we are disentangled from speculative inquiries, and occupied in the pursuit of scriptural truth, the more settled will be our conviction of the genuineness of the testimony, and our consequent enjoyment of its privileges. Let us not, therefore, trifle with temptation, by suffering the objections of a cavilling infidelity to “lodge within us.” Let us

¹ Job xi. 12.

² Instit. Book iii. chap. xxi. § 2. In a subsequent allusion to the subject, he justly denominates the eager appetite for hidden knowledge to be ‘*a species of madness*,’ c. xxiii. § 8. In the same spirit our admirable Hooker remarks—‘Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High; whom, although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name, yet our soundest knowledge is, to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither can know him; and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess without confession, that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above and we upon earth, therefore it behooveth our words to be wary and few.’ And again—‘That little (of the law of the Divine Government) which we darkly apprehend, we admire; the rest with religious ignorance we humbly and meekly adore.’ Book i. § 2.

instantly bring them to the test of conscience, "to the law and to the testimony."¹ Thus let us "resist the devil, and he will flee from us."²

Secondly—we would inculcate an implicit faith in the divine record. And here we trace the source of all the sin and misery, that have deluged the world for nearly six thousand years. God's unchangeable declaration—"Thou shalt surely die"—was diluted to an uncertainty.³ Thus when confidence in the word of God was weakened, Satan's lie easily prevailed. On the other hand, how fully did Miss Graham's unreserved reliance on the promise—"Ask, and it shall be given you"—recover her fine mind to its true position; intrenched upon the supreme authority of Scripture; prostrate in a sense of her ignorance; honoring her God, and honored by him, in a trembling reverential submission to his word!⁴ How many cavilling questions arise in the defect of this spirit! The difficulties which cannot be presently explained are considered reasonable grounds for unbelief. Man under the pretence of a desire to satisfy his doubts, rebels against what he does not understand, and begins to "reply against God."⁵ But in fact we want not more light, but more humility. Herein consists the important difference between the caviller and the sincere inquirer. The one questions, speculates, and is dissatisfied. The other, in the consciousness of his "blindness," is willing to be "brought by a way that he knew not, and to be led in paths that he had not known."⁶ He follows under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, like his father Abraham under the direction of Providence,⁷ step by step in implicit faith. He asks not—"How can these things be?"⁸ But—"Thus saith the Lord" determines all his difficulties without gainsaying. And this practical acknowledgment of the supremacy of Scripture is the just demand of God. We must not, according to the principles of Neology, degrade the authority of his word, by subjecting it to trial at the bar of reason. We must not descend from our high vantage position of faith, to the lower ground of disputation. This inversion of the respective offices of reason and faith casts down God from his throne, and turns our light into darkness. Reason must indeed be exercised in examining the *credentials* of the revelation; for to receive an unauthenticated testimony is credulity, not faith; and scepticism is less culpable than unwarranted belief. But the credentials being once established, we are bound to receive its contents with the most implicit submission. Having once therefore admitted the divine claim of Scripture, we must yield to it our unreserved homage. The question is not—"What thinkest thou?"—but—"How readest thou?"⁹ This is the humility of faith—the child-like spirit of the Gospel—the evidence of the conversion of the heart to God. "Whosoever shall" thus "humble himself as a little child,

¹ Isa. viii. 20.

² James iv. 7.

³ Gen. ii. 17; iii. 3.

⁴ See chap. ii. and comp. Isaiah lxvi. 2.

⁵ Rom. ix. 20.

⁶ Isaiah xlii. 16.

⁷ Heb. xi. 8.

⁸ John iii. 9.

⁹ Luke x. 26.

the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”¹ The enriching light of heavenly teaching dispels many difficulties of the reasoning mind. “If the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light.”² “Sitting with Mary at Jesus’ feet,” and “learning of our meek and lowly” teacher, we “shall find”—instead of uncertainty, confusion, and wretchedness—“rest unto our souls.”

Thirdly—we would impress the importance of a solid experience of the power of the Gospel upon the heart. When the objections against Christianity are fairly answered, the main hindrance to its reception yet remain. There is a strong connection between the speculative principle of infidelity, and the “evil heart of unbelief.”³ Unbelief is the disease—not of the understanding—but of the heart. It comprehends the “fulfilling of the *desires of the flesh and of the mind.*”⁴ In the one case it is the love of sin resisting the holiness of the Gospel. In the other case it is (as we have just illustrated the points) the unsubdued pride of the heart rejecting the humility of the Gospel. A full and practical reception of the truth of God is therefore a powerful defence against the subtle and encroaching enemy. It was a defect in this point, that exposed Miss Graham to the baneful influence of her investigating mind. Her early principles of religion, though sincere, were not inwrought in her soul in deep and permanent influence. This unfixed character formed therefore an ineffective safeguard in the atmosphere of powerful temptation. Her neglect of prayer threw her off for a while from her dependence upon God. Her doubts thickened upon her. The strength of her soul was paralyzed. The enemy was at the door, and took advantage of her loss of inward perception to gain a temporary ascendancy. However strong and satisfactory is the external evidence of the Gospel; yet we want the apprehension and proof of its adaptation to our necessities, to endear and establish it to us in all the strength of sensible demonstration. When “the Gospel comes in power, and in the Holy Ghost,” then does it come *with much assurance.* “He that believeth hath the witness in himself.”⁵ The transforming power of the Gospel into the divine

¹ Matt. xviii. 3, 4.

² Ibid. vi. 22

³ Luke x. 39. Matt. xi. 29. We are tempted here to give one further quotation from Miss Graham’s Manuscript. Speaking of Locke’s Doctrines of Intermediate Principles, (i. e. principles established upon acknowledged axioms, as a step to further advance in knowledge,) she adds—‘To the confirmed Christian, the Bible is a repository of such ‘intermediate principles.’ Once convinced that it is the word of God, its truths become the axiom, to which he refers in the establishment of every religious sentiment. They are his data, his well-established propositions, from which he admits of no appeal. He studies their meaning under a divine Teacher, who gives him “line upon line, and precept upon precept.” Under his sacred guidance he is enabled to “learn the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, and to go on to perfection.”’ Heb. vi. 1.

‘Happy is the unlettered Christian, who loves his Bible. He is in possession of a set of intermediate incontrovertible principles, for want of which, the wise and learned of this world are thrown back in their researches after truth. He shall “understand more than the ancients, because he keeps the testimonies of his God.” Psalm cxix. 100. Nor must the learned Christian hope for an equal degree of felicity, unless he can bring all his human attainments into a blessed subservience to the knowledge that is in Christ Jesus.’

⁴ Heb. iii. 12.

⁵ Eph. ii. 3.

⁶ Thess. i. 5. 1 John v. 10.

image is the most decisive evidence of its divine origin ; and this is an evidence which is always present with us ; connected with all our Christian habits of thought and practical life ; and accumulating in weight of testimony, in every successive instance of its efficacy throughout the world. The *unbeliever* therefore (for this is the real character of the merely nominal professor of the Bible) enters into conflict with the infidel at serious disadvantage. He may probably be inferior to his opponent in power of reasoning, and subtlety of argumentation. He may be unfurnished with a distributive view of the historical evidence of the Gospel, to repel the attacks that are made upon it ; and, being unable to strengthen his points by the demonstrable evidence of his own senses, he is in great danger of being shaken from the first principles of his faith. Or even supposing him to be on equal terms with his adversary—well furnished with an outward coat of armor ; yet if his interior be not defended by “the whole armor of God,” the poisoned arrows may find an entrance into his inmost soul. If he be ignorant of the spiritual blessings of the Gospel, he can have but a very imperfect conviction of the importance of its principles. They hang loosely about him. There is a want of energy in the grasp to “hold them fast ;” and not being “grounded and settled in the faith,” never having had a real possession of “the hope of the Gospel,” he cannot be secure against being “moved away from” the profession of it. His indecision is the first step to apostasy, and should it proceed to this ultimate point, it is only his just punishment for neglecting to walk closely and humbly with his God. It is therefore most difficult for him to keep the field at all points against the infidel upon the lower ground of external argument. For though we protest against the supposition of any vulnerable, or even debatable points on the side of Christianity ; yet the strength of the infidel side, as we have just hinted, bears upon his opponent with mighty influence connected with the appetites of his own heart. Thus man becomes not only a rebel against his God, but a traitor to himself, and the murderer of his own happiness. Living, therefore, without prayer—we should assay to go to the intellectual conflict with armor that we have not proved, and therefore that would render us but uncertain protection.¹ Unexercised in the “faith” of the Gospel, we cast away the only “shield, whereby we could quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.”² In proportion to the practical influence of the principles of the Gospel will be our intelligent conviction of their divine origin. A holy taste will enable us to receive the evidence of Christian truth. In every step of spiritual religion will the invisible realities of the Gospel be embodied and appropriated. The light to discover their external evidence will be thus increased by the removal of a counteracting internal bias ; and the believer, retreating into a heavenly atmosphere of communion

¹ See 1 Sam. xvii. 39.

² Eph. vi. 16.

with God, will be little disturbed by speculative doubts—"Thou art my hiding-place and my shield; I hope in thy word."¹

Lastly—let the mind be informed, expanded, strengthened in its positions by an intelligent acquaintance with some of our most valuable treatises upon the evidences of Christianity—those most especially, that connect the testimony of internal perception with external proof.² Thus covered at all points of intellectual or spiritual warfare "with the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left"³ the simple-minded Christian will "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear."⁴

II. We would mark from this Memoir the high importance of a settled profession of the Gospel. We have already seen the rich and matured character of Miss Graham's doctrinal sentiments. Hers was not the religion of feeling, (though her feelings were powerfully engaged,) but of solid, intelligent conviction. There was no excitement of impulse or imagination—no love of novelty—but a contentment in solid, scriptural, and practical views of Divine truth. Here was a groundwork for that steady consistency of profession, in which she was enabled to serve her God and Saviour with acceptance and usefulness. It would be a painful investigation to trace the various causes and symptoms of that unsettled aspect of religion, which the present state of the church so largely exhibits. *Too often we find the profession to be of a superficial, and therefore of an uninfluential character.* A susceptible temperament opens the door to self-delusion. The religion of the imagination is substituted for the religion of the heart. Sentimentalism captivates the mind by a sort of confused ideal sublimity. Unorganized excitement is mistaken for solid practical principle. External separation from the world is identified with the spiritual love of holiness. A habit of serious thought and partial reformation is commenced without any defined motive or object. Hence, when the temporary impulse has subsided, the baseless fabric resting upon it begins to shake. The religion of novelty and interest becomes irksome drudgery, without any spring of activity or privilege. The peace and joy, which had been anticipated as the immediate result of a certain train of feelings, ends in disappointment; and the "goodness" which had no connection with tenderness of heart, humility, and faith, "passes away as the morning cloud and the early dew."⁵ The man who had been living upon notions, doctrines, and feelings—not upon re-

¹ Psalm cxix. 114. The following important advice given by a College Tutor to his young men is well worthy of serious attention. 'You should not forget, that the only sure preservative against infidelity is a substantial practical regard to our holy religion in all its principles and duties. And this is that armor of light, in which I wish both myself and you to be clothed, that we may "fight the good fight," and at length "receive that crown of glory that fadeth not away."—Memoir of Rev. Thomas Lloyd, late Tutor of King's College, p. 60.

² Such is the Bishop of Chester's Treatise—the Lectures of the Bishops of Calcutta and Ohio—Dr. O. Gregory's Letters—and a valuable Manual by Mr. Joseph John Gurney—"Hints on the Portable Evidence of Christianity."

³ 2 Corinthians vi. 7.

⁴ 1 Peter iii. 15.

⁵ 1 Hosea vi. 4.

alities—sinks down into the character of a dry, heartless professor, with no genuine response to the vitality of godliness.

Of others again we would speak with special tenderness, while we are constrained to consider them as wanderers from “the old path,” where the church of God has hitherto found “rest,”¹ refreshment, and establishment. But we cannot view without the deepest concern the attempt now made by true disciples of Christ (for such undoubtedly are many of those to whom we allude) to degrade the Son of God to a sinful participation and sympathy with our nature. We feel bound to protest against that ‘great truth,’ now for the first time opened to the church—that believers in this life of sin and imperfection attain at least equal communion with their God, and participation of Divine influence with their heavenly Saviour.² Thus is the child of fallen Adam complete in himself, not in his Saviour. He needs no exercise of contrition—no application to the blood of the atonement for his daily deficiencies—no High Priest to “bear the iniquities of his holy things.” The plenary baptism of the Spirit precludes the need of an atoning and interceding Saviour for present deficiencies and defilements, and perfects what is called an holiness in the flesh—an inherent righteousness, which blots out the character of sinners, and obscures the glory of the righteousness of the Redeemer, as the exclusive ground of justification before God.²

If we look for the external seal of these anti-scriptural doctrines, it will be found in the exhibition of certain tongues (dissimilar from the primitive manifestations, because unknown, and therefore, unfruitful to the church³) connected with impulses of an extraordinary

¹ Jeremiah vi. 16.

² ‘The great truth,’ which Mr. Irving opens to us, we will state in his own words,—‘that the baptism of the Holy Ghost doth bring to every believer the presence of the Father, and the power of the Holy Ghost, according to that measure at least, in which Christ during the days of his flesh proposed the same.’ The day of Pentecost. p. 39. This communication he immediately expounds to be the ‘Divine nature, (alluding to 2 Peter i. 4), which was intended from the beginning for man; and which can mean nothing less in the Scriptural acceptation than perfect and essential holiness,’ (Eph. iv. 24. 1 John i. 5.) Indeed Mr. I.’s subsequent explanation includes spiritual grace as well as miraculous powers, p. 55. The reader may see the confirmation of this bold statement, and of the inferences legitimately deduced from it, in a remarkable ‘Narrative of Facts, by Robert Baxter.’ (Pp. 102—116, 124—126)—a truly Christian acknowledgment of Divine mercy in recovery from delusion, and an exposition of the subtle causes connected with its origin.

³ That the Primitive Tongues were known, and therefore fruitful, is proved from the history of the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 3—11), from the corresponding manifestation to Cornelius and his company (Acts xi. 18), and from St. Paul’s statement of his own gift, evidently vouchsafed to facilitate his missionary work. (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) It will hardly be pretended that two different dispensations of tongues were vouchsafed. See the Apostle’s decision upon the unfruitfulness of unknown tongues. (1 Cor. xiv. 9—19.) If the interpolation ‘unknown,’ were removed from our version, the simple translation would be ‘languages.’ We may remark one striking discrepancy between the apostolical and the modern manifestations of gifts. In the former case they were largely bestowed upon ministers, as the credentials of their commission. In the present time they are confined to members of the congregation, who thus *virtually* take the precedence of their ministers; inasmuch as an immediate revelation, being the present voice of God in and to the church, obviously commands higher authority than the more ordinary channels of Divine communication. Thus the inward revelation may take the place of the written word; females often occupy the dignity and responsibility of the sacred office; and by an inversion of the scriptural rule and order (Mal. ii. 7.) ministers sit at the feet of their

character, both of which have been confessed by some of the most accredited subjects to have been the offspring of delusion. Does not all this almost seem to give a prophetic character to the Apostolic caution—"I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"?¹ That these doctrines come not from Christ is manifest from their obvious tendency to exalt self, and to stain the unspotted holiness of our Divine Saviour. That they are not the fruit of the unction of the Spirit, is equally clear from their results, in obscuring the light and authority of Scripture by some super-induced credentials, and thus confounding "the spirit of truth" in the world, and "the spirit of error"² in the new revelation. That as novelties they have no stability, we are encouraged to believe, from the gracious deliverance that has been manifested to some, who were fast bound under their seductive influence; while those who are yet beguiled claim (though perhaps they may not thank us for putting forth the claim) our sympathy, forbearance, and prayer.

What are wanted on all sides as the basis of an established profession, are, first, *brokenness and contrition of heart*. Here, as we before observed, Miss Graham's deficiency exposed her to "the snare of the devil." Not being deeply impressed with the sense of her own vileness, she could not lie low enough before her God to receive his pure and heavenly light in her soul. He was therefore pleased to humble her thoroughly, till he had brought her to his feet; that happiest, lowest, yet most exalted place for a redeemed sinner. What Job learnt in his prostrate frame of humiliation, made all the former attainments of this "perfect man" of God appear as nothing in his eyes.³ And indeed there is much to be acquired in a self-abasing walk with God, and in a well-digested study of our hearts, before there can be any capacity for receiving a scriptural apprehension of the doctrines, that are the matter of present controversy in the church. The decided views on these subjects, that are sometimes received at an early, and perhaps uncertain, stage of the Christian profession, have been probably obtained under the influence of excitement, rather than from Divine teaching—from an implicit

people; their "*lips*"—not the "*priest's*"—keep knowledge, and the law is sought *at*⁴ their "*mouth*." Thus God becomes "the author" of "confusion"—not of "peace, as he is in all churches of the saints." (1 Cor. xiv. 33.) The writer would desire to cherish a tender, compassionate, and prayerful interest for those whom he is constrained to consider deluded brethren. He would protest against the unholy trifling and bitterness with which they have been too often regarded. He readily acknowledges the practical influence of some of the main principles of the Gospel fixed in their minds at the commencement of their course; and still operating as a preservative from the dominant influence of their serious error. Yet he feels himself constrained, though with painful personal reluctance, to bear his testimony against unscriptural doctrines attested by hitherto unknown manifestations, which, if they be of supernatural origin, may possibly, notwithstanding the apparent holiness which is often connected with them, bear the mark rather of the delusion than of the spiritual glory of the latter days. Mark xiii. 22, 23. Indeed this stamp of holiness may be the illustration of "the depths of Satan"—of those subtle devices by which the "*angel of light*" is permitted to use the instrumentality of the Lord's people to convey his own deadly poison into the very bosom of the church.

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 3.² 1 John iv. 16.³ Job. xl. 4; xlvi. 5, 6, with i. 8.

submission to some professed leader in the church, rather than from a simple exercised study of the sacred volume. In the spirit of brokenness of heart, this deluding power of excitement is subjugated to a chastened temper of tenderness and self-distrust. One want absorbs every faculty and desire of the soul. There is no temptation to linger by the way in busy idleness amid the attractions of novelty. There is a careful guard against all entanglements of disputation that might, by diverting the mind from the main object of pursuit, palsy the spiritual affections, and pervert even the word of God to an occasion of erasing instead of fixing permanent impressions upon the heart. In this spirit of "simplicity and godly sincerity," the mind will gradually be enabled to receive scriptural statements, that before it had been unable to comprehend; and will grasp, with an intelligent habit of faith, the fulness of Divine truth in all its happy and practical influence.

Connected with this temper, *spiritual apprehensions of Christ are of the utmost moment.* This was the main principle of Miss Graham's steadiness of profession. She was accustomed, as we have before noticed, to "*consider Christ.*"¹ Hers were not transient glances at the glorious object of faith. Her religion was characterized by a contemplative habit of connecting every part of the Christian system with Christ. And in this great subject, the most intellectual mind will find full employ. Unfathomable depths, after a long life of research, will yet remain to be explored. Here we may advance with deeper intensity of interest at every successive step, until the whole soul is "filled with all the fulness of God!"² A mind sustained and invigorated by these sublime contemplations, will lose its speculative taste; will try "doubtful disputations" by their reference to this grand subject; and, while enlarging to the utmost its compass of sacred truth, will be drawn off from uncertain doctrines to those that are evidently scriptural in their character, clear in their light, fruitful in privilege, holy in influence. "Not" being altogether "ignorant of Satan's devices, the Christian will readily trace to its proper source all diverging from this concentrating point, and will steadily guard against this baneful "corruption from the simplicity that is in Christ." And thus living by faith, he will live upon the vitality of the Gospel. The unfolding of Christ makes holiness at once practicable and precious. His principles, as they expand in knowledge, will become more practical in results; while these results will reciprocally exercise his principles in a more lively and delightful glow of Divine light."³

For the cultivation of this spiritual contemplation, *habits of retirement seem to be of importance.* Leaving the time, measure, and rules to every man's judgment and conscience, and being fully aware that a difference of character generates in this particular a diversity in the operation of Divine grace—we cannot forbear inculcating the general subject, as applicable to the several departments

¹ See pp. 178, 179.

² Ephes. iii. 18, 19.

³ 1 See 2 Peter i. 5—8.

of the church. Doubtless Miss Graham's retired habits gave much advantage to the exercise of her mind in heavenly contemplation. Probably much of the defective standard of attainment and privilege in the present day may be traced to the neglect of the habits now adverted to. Christians actively engaged in the service of God, may be ensnared by the very activity of their engagements. Those of a more quiet and collected temperament will connect their "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord"—their most solid, stable, invigorating comfort—with the cultivation of this habit. Those who are enabled still to maintain the freshness of their early impressions, feel their need of this advantage, and mourn over the deprivation of it as a loss, for which no Christian society—however refined, elevated, or holy—can compensate. All who realize the difficulties of their daily path, and the weariness that belongs to incessant watchfulness and conflict, must feel, that, as the body cannot be sustained without sleep, so neither can the soul thrive without *the active rest*, so to speak, of retirement with God. A recollected habit of mind—shutting out the world, and calling home our thoughts to Christ and eternity—is indispensable to give life and spirituality to our religion, to bring the one object of faith into fixed contemplation, and the more enlivening prospects of eternity into more constant influence.¹

Need we further suggest the incalculable importance of a deep and spiritual study of the word of God, in connection with an established profession of the Gospel? Miss Graham's exclusive study of the word after the period of her recovery from infidelity (*'the Lord helping her to pray over every word she read'*²) must have been productive of a rich harvest to her soul. And indeed the general supremacy and entireness of this sacred study throughout life³ was a main source of her mature apprehension of the doctrines of Christ. May not a partial study of Scripture explain the difficulty, why sincere Christians—praying for the promised "guidance of the Holy Spirit into all truth"⁴—should yet be left under the influence of error? Do they heartily desire to be guided into the *all truth*—into practical as well as doctrinal—into humbling as well as the more exciting—truths? Is every part of the holy book, after the example of this devoted saint, honored as the word of God—carefully explored, and earnestly prayed over? The promise supposes a diligent search of the whole field of Divine truth, and the

¹ 'The fault of many Christians in our day,' remarks a truly Christian observer,¹ 'is, that they live too much in public. We do not mean that they are dissipated, or particularly worldly in their habits and associations (though this is true, alas! of some), but that the work of the heart is postponed to the work of the head and the hands. Committees, schools, charitable meetings, occupy the time, and fill the thoughts; while solitude, and especially a devotional solitude, is a thing almost wholly unknown. Half the errors of the present day may probably be traced to this source; the facility with which Christians are carried away by every kind of doctrine; the low standard of personal holiness; the small amount of self-denying charity—for these, and such as these, brethren, there is no remedy but walking, like Enoch, very closely with God.'—*Blunt's History of Elisha*.

² See p. 97.

³ See pp. 180—182.

⁴ John xvi. 13.

neglect of any part of this field shuts us out from the sphere of the promise. Perhaps also a superficial study of "the word of Christ"—even when the whole surface is surveyed—is one of the most prominent causes of slight profession in the present day. It too often lodges only—not "dwells" with us; or it dwells with us---not *in us*; or the "riches" of the treasure-house are too little regarded; or the "wisdom that is from above" is but little exercised in the application of its contents to our several emergencies.¹ In some cases we mark a disproportionate attention to the externals of Scripture, which betrays a criminal indifference to its spiritual excellences. The holy simplicity of study is deteriorated. The mind is contented to feed upon husks, while the heavenly pleasures connected with the internal study of the sacred volume are untouched and unknown. With others again the subjects revolve before the mind, but without research. The difference is inconceivable between the act of reading, and the habit of meditation and search in the sacred volume. If the mind does not ponder often upon Scripture, no definite views will be obtained, no profitable instruction drawn out from it. Whereas a spiritually reflecting mind will extract rich meaning from its apparently difficult and barren portions. Being made the subject of thought, and formed into materials for prayer, Scripture knowledge becomes of a more heavenly character; and meditation upon a single passage becomes more fruitful than the general reading of large portions of the sacred book. Perhaps there is no precept more intimately connected with establishment in the Gospel, than that which has been indirectly adverted to—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Let there be no part of us, where the word does not dwell. Let there be no part of the word, that does not dwell in us. Here is a new world of heavenly light, where the intellect is called forth into its full exercise. Here the soul is refreshed, and the heart is moulded under the influence of Divine wisdom; and hence stability of our profession "in the simplicity of Christ."

We would venture to add a few words upon the *high responsibility of cultivating "the spirit of a sound mind."* The high estimate which the Apostle formed of this faculty may be seen in his placing it among the special gifts for the work of the ministry,² and in his prayers for his own son in the faith,³ and for his beloved flock, that they might maintain it in constant exercise. His own example proves, that, instead of a sound judgment cooling the fervor of zeal (as it is sometimes supposed to do), it increases its effect by directing its movements.⁴ Indeed a weakness in this point brings with it many hindrances to a settled consistency of profession. A luxuriant imagination often obscures the well-regulated and implicit exercise of faith. The truth is often clothed with adventitious attractions. It is not received simply as of God. There is a want of clear perception and determined grasp of the points presented to

¹ Col. iii. 16.

² 2 Tim. i. 6, 7.

³ Ib. ii. 7.

⁴ Phil. i. 9.

view. Again, an excited temperament without a staid judgment, opens many avenues of delusion. This is a matter of frequent notice in the cases of a defective religious education, or of late conversion; or in a rapid transition from the cares of business or the warfare of the camp, to the heated atmospheres which are now to be found in the church. The dazzling brightness of truth breaking in upon unfurnished minds, and often upon palpable darkness, overpowers the faculty of discrimination. The overturn of their former opinions has destroyed confidence in their own conclusions; and together with their old prejudices, their intellectual stability is swept away. In another direction, also, lively affections and weak judgment give a wrong bias to the character. The Christian under an enlivening sense of the Saviour's love is ready to embrace any new view or doctrine, which he conceives calculated to honor and exalt him. Now a controlling power is as necessary for the healthful regularity of the mind, as an invigorating principle. Opinionative decision is too often mistaken for spiritual principle. We want the influence of "the wisdom from above," not only to open to our minds expanded and attractive views of truth, but to enable us to affix to every part its just proportion—that no favorite doctrines be suffered to absorb our interest, or be raised to an undue importance—that essential points may have their preponderance over those of a more doubtful character—that every step of our progress may present to us a more complete view of the harmony of the system. The multitude of excursions in the theological field, without and beyond the rule of revelation, are an evidence of that wandering of the mind from reality, and that triumph of imagination over truth, which denotes a mind not in the full possession of its own powers. But let us in another track be careful that the sublime contemplation¹ of the Gospel does not pamper a prurient curiosity; but rather that it gives a more settled character to our faith, and a wise and active direction to our practice. Let us watch also, under the exercise of this sound mind, that the fear of uncertain doctrines does not quench the ardour of Scriptural investigation—that we continue our research "unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding,"²—that we go on as long as there is one point of the sacred book unexplored—"forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."³

We cannot but remark how frequently a defect of soundness of mind is connected with unsteadiness of profession. And indeed in all cases, important talents of influence are wasted, and valuable spheres of usefulness are contracted, by this evil. What servant of God, therefore, conscious alike of his responsibility and weakness, will not present his frequent and earnest petition to the throne of grace—"Teach me good judgment and knowledge?"³ These estimable blessings are not the exclusive accomplishments of highly-gifted intellects. The believer—weak in natural intelligence, but

¹ Col. ii. 2.

² Phil. iii. 13.

³ Psalm cxix. 66.

simple in dependence upon his God—will be not only guided, but established in the truth, even in the midst of abounding errors. He will be “taught not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God.”¹ He will be led to “try the things that differ”² in the church—not by the holiness of their several professors, (which—even if it were more perfectly apprehended—is not the decisive Test of Truth,) but by “the law and the testimony;” being assured “that if they speak not according to this word”—though they be “angels of light”—“there is no light in them.”³

III. *The memoir before us may also point out the ground and blessedness of Scriptural enjoyment.* Miss Graham’s full reception of the high principles of the Gospel made Christian devotedness a privilege, and Christian resignation the path of peace. Her clear views of sovereign grace; her tender spirit of assured confidence; and the bright beaming rays of her hope of glory, were sources of incessant energy and heavenly cheerfulness. The spiritual atmosphere in which she lived, communicated life to her fainting spirit. Her heart received a new bent, and found a new home in the bosom of her God. The staid sobriety of her character,—the happiness she found in entire consecration of herself to God—her quiet composure of mind in the chamber of suffering—the overcoming strength and vigor, sustaining her soul in joyfulness—abundantly proved, that she had not embraced an empty cloud—that she had not caught a shadow under the delusion of enjoying God—but that God was indeed the rest and portion of her soul.

But what, on the other hand, is the portion—what the prospect—of the man (whether destitute of the profession of the Gospel, or holding it in delusion,) who lives “without God in the world”?⁴ He must raise his “altar”—if he thinks of worship at all for the quieting of conscience—“To the unknown God.”⁵ He makes to himself a god after his own fancy, his own heart; and it proves to be an infinite nothing. He cannot know his Creator;⁶ he therefore cannot enjoy him. For want of this knowledge and enjoyment, he dooms himself to everlasting misery. He will not rest in God. He cannot rest in anything short of God. If ever there was a remedy designed for man, bearing the character of divine love, it is the Gospel of Jesus, opening an uncreated source as alone sufficient to quench the thirst of immortal souls—“Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.”⁷

¹ I John iv. 1.

² Phil. i. 10. Marg.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 14. Isaiah viii. 20.

⁴ Ephesians ii. 12.

⁵ Acts xvii. 23.

⁶ See Miss Graham’s striking and original thoughts on this subject in the latter part of the Test of Truth.

⁷ Isaiah lv. 1—3.

Let us hear the breathings of the holy and seraphic Baxter, after this soul-satisfying portion. ‘In thee I expect my true felicity and content. To know thee, and love thee, and delight in thee, must be my blessedness, or I must have none. The little tastes of this sweetness, which my thirsty soul hath had, do tell me that there is no other real joy. I feel that thou hast made my mind to know thee, my heart to love thee, my tongue to praise thee, and all that I am and have to serve thee. And even in the panting languishing desires and motions of my soul, I find that thou, and only thou art its resting-place; and though love do now but *search*, and *pray*, and *cry*, and *weep*, and is reaching upward, but cannot reach, the glorious light, the blessed knowledge, the perfect love, for which it longeth; yet, by its eye, its aim, its motions, its moans, its groans, I know its meaning, where it would be, and I know its end. My displaced soul will never be well, till it come near to thee, till it know thee better, till it love thee more. Wert thou to be found in the most solitary desert, it would seek thee; or in the uttermost parts of the earth, it would make after thee. Thy presence makes a crowd a church; thy converse maketh a closet, or solitary wood or field, to be akin to the angelical choir. The creature were dead, if thou wert not its life; and ugly, if thou wert not its beauty; and insignificant, if thou wert not its sense. The soul its deformed, which is without thine image; and lifeless which liveth not in love to thee, if love be not its pulse, and prayer and praise is constant breath. The mind is unlearned, which readeth not thy name on all the world. He dreameth, who doth not live to thee. Oh! let me have no other portion! no reason, no love, no life, but what is devoted to thee, employed on thee, and for thee here, and shall be perfected in thee, the only perfect, final object for evermore. Upon the holy altar erected by thy Son, and by his hands and his meditation, I humbly devote and offer to thee *this heart*—Oh! that I could say with greater feeling—*this flaming, loving, longing heart!* But the sacred fire which must kindle on my sacrifice, must come from thee. It will not else ascend unto thee. Let it consume this dross, so the nobler part may know its home. All that I can say to commend it to thine acceptance, is, that I hope it is washed in precious blood, and that there is something in it that is thine own. It still looketh toward thee, and groaneth to thee, and floweth after thee, and will be content with gold, and mirth, and honor, and such inferior fooleries no more. It lieth at thy door, and will be entertained, or perish. Though, alas! it loves thee not as it would, I boldly say, it longs to love thee. It loves to love thee. It seeks, it craves no greater blessedness than perfect, endless, mutual love. It is vowed to thee, even to thee alone, and will never take up with shadows more; but it is resolved to lie down in sorrow and despair, if thou wilt not be its rest and joy. It hateth itself for loving thee no more, accounting no want, deformity, shame, or pain, so great and grievous a calamity.¹

¹ Reasons of the Christian religion, chap. xii.

Christians ! You, like this holy man of God, have made trial of this portion ; and you alone are competent to speak of it. You can bear testimony that the knowledge and enjoyment of God, coming to us through Christ—our Head, our All—is unspeakable bliss. It fills the most enlarged appetite of the soul. It fixes our hovering thoughts and restless anticipations. It perfects all our desires in holy delight and joy. It is the triumph of everlasting love over all the wretchedness, wants, and guilt of man. It gives supreme enjoyment in life—hope in death—a portion for eternity.

"WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE ? AND THERE IS NONE UPON EARTH THAT I DESIRE BESIDE THEE. MY FLESH AND MY HEART FAILETH ; BUT GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART, AND MY PORTION FOREVER.¹⁷"

¹ Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.

THE END.

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THE TEST OF TRUTH.

BY

MARY JANE GRAHAM,
LATE OF STOKE FLEMING, DEVON.

"ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU."



THE TEST OF TRUTH.

PART I.

ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU.—*Luke xi. 9.*

I AM not ignorant of the disadvantage under which I labor, in addressing a class of readers who lightly esteem the Bible, with a quotation from the Bible. Such a commencement carries with it an air both of unfairness and inconsistency. It looks like an attempt to assume the point in dispute, and to argue from a source which we have not yet proved to be genuine. Let me hasten to dispel a suspicion so unfavorable to a candid reception of the observations I am about to offer. Rational and philosophizing sceptics, in presenting you with the above text of Scripture, I do not ask you to receive it as the word of God; but only to bestow upon it a little of that patient and courteous attention, which the word of one of your fellow-men might claim from you. You cannot, in justice to your own professions of candor and equity, refuse compliance with so reasonable a demand.

Without further apology, I submit one of the sayings of Jesus Christ to your attentive consideration. I am far from any intention of pressing upon you its divine authority, or insisting on a blind obedience. Upon its own merits let it stand or fall.

My object in thus briefly addressing you, is not to convince, but to invite you to a method by which you may convince yourselves. With this design I shall take nothing for granted but what you will be readily disposed to concede. I will suppose that it is yet a matter of doubt whether the Scriptures are the genuine and lively oracles of God, or the sordid, lying invention of man. Take, if you please, a still further advantage. Assume that appearances are strongly *against* their divine origin: that the external evidences of Christianity are insufficient—her internal proof unsatisfactory—her professors few and inconsistent—her opponents respectable both in numbers and talents—the objections against her weighty and plausible—and all the arguments in her favor weak and inconclusive. I will further suppose that you are in earnest, when you assert that truth alone is the object of your search, and that you are ready to embrace her wherever you find her. I say, I will suppose

that you are in earnest. And truly I should offer an affront to your understandings, both as men and philosophers, were I to imagine you capable of viewing the subject in any other than a serious light.

If then you refuse to believe the Bible, it must be because you can find no means of proving it to be true. It cannot be because you love to continue in darkness, in perplexity, in unbelief. Let me put the case that some infallible criterion were proposed to you ; —some method of ascertaining by your own personal experience, the truth or falsehood of the Bible. May it not be inferred, that you would be eager to put it fairly to the test, and willing to abide by the result of your experiment ?

Such a criterion I am about to propose to you. It is so simple, that a child may comprehend ; so just, that a philosopher may approve ; and so forcible, that none who have fairly tried, have ever been found able to withstand it. Such is the saying of Jesus Christ to which I now invite your attention—“ Ask, and it shall be given you.”

Who Jesus Christ was, or what degree of deference is due to his word, it suits not my present purpose to inquire. I shall content myself with proving to you, that the saying now under consideration contains nothing in itself absurd or improbable. And having established this necessary point, I shall propose it to you as the touchstone of truth. I am fully aware of the proud self-sufficiency, with which unconverted men expect the mightiest truths to be brought down to the level of human reason. It shall therefore be my care, in the few simple propositions which I shall lay before you, to introduce nothing which can too severely tax your belief or your understanding.

You are, I hope, willing to allow, that this universal frame is the work of some Divine, uncreated intelligence. You are too susceptible in heart and intellect, to be able to look round on the wonders of creation, and not perceive in them all, manifest tokens of creating power. But I am prepared to make every allowance for the strength of your incredulity. If, therefore, I appear to you to have asked too much, I will yet be more moderate in my demands. It is enough for my argument, if you admit that the existence of God, if not certain, is at least probable, or if not probable, that it is at least possible. The various instances of deep design and exquisite contrivance which force themselves upon your notice on every side, will not suffer you to deny the *possible* existence of some great Designer and Contriver. Whether you look upwards, at the innumerable starry host ; or downwards, upon the insect that crawls beneath your feet ; around you, on the beauteous furniture of the universe ; or within, upon the little world of thought and feeling that is stirring in your own bosom :—whichever way you look, whichever way you turn, you are met by something which compels you to acknowledge that the existence of God is no absurd or improbable hypothesis. Even that man who wrote “ atheist”

under his name, was not, I am persuaded, an atheist when alone. There is no such thing as an atheist in solitude. You may boast that you are one in the convivial circle ; but you cannot support the character in your closet. There God will find you out. There the unwelcome reality of his presence will confound you. And not only so—but even in the height of social mirth, when surrounded by friends who sympathize and admire, you dare to make merry with the name and being of God :—even then, a secret horror, a sad foreboding conviction will sometimes come over you, and you will feel in every pore that *GOD IS*, and that vain are your feeble efforts to annihilate Him. I appeal to the stoutest heart among you, whether I speak truth. You cannot quite divest yourself of the conviction—you know you cannot. God has not left himself without witness, even in your heart. There is a point at which incredulity itself must make a stand ; and that point is the existence of God.

I take it then for granted, that some of you will admit the existence of Almighty God to be undeniably certain : many will own that it is probable : and *all* will allow that it is *possible*.

Neither will you be so hardy as to deny, that, if there be a God, the highest happiness of his creatures must consist in knowing, and their highest duty in loving him. The Maker of every grand and lovely object must be infinitely grand and lovely : and if to know his works be good, to know Himself must be better than all. But if he be *our* Maker, if in him we live, and move, and have our being, then surely it must be our most urgent concern to know One with whom we have so much to do. If he be our Maker, do we owe him no service ? If our Benefactor, do we owe him no thanks ? If he be our Father, must we not love him ? If our Master, must we not fear him ? But how can we render service or thanks, love or praise, to an *unknown* Being ? We may indeed view him with a servile dread ; for nature itself teaches us to shrink from that we do not know. But we cannot serve God, till we know what he requires of us. We cannot thank him, till we know what he has done for us. We cannot love God, till we are acquainted with his thoughts and purposes towards us. Love, such as deserves the name, implies knowledge—communion—tried excellence—unlimited confidence. Those dark, shadowy, undefined notions which the Deist entertains of God, may cause a slight feeling of admiration, a transient glow of thankfulness to pass across his bosom ; but they will produce no real, substantial, enduring sentiment :—they will never make him *love*. To know God must then be our highest happiness, whether we consider his intrinsic excellence, or the relation in which we stand to him as his creatures. And as the Maker cannot but be infinitely greater than any of the things he has made ; so the knowledge of God cannot but be infinitely more desirable than the knowledge of his works.

It is a self-evident proposition, that what is worth having, is worth seeking. If then the knowledge of God be so well worth having,

it must be proportionably worth seeking. No pains can possibly be too great to bestow on the attainment of such an object. I am not now speaking of the existence of God as undeniably established. I affirm, that the *bare possibility* that a being so glorious and excellent exists, makes it worth our while to leave the contemplation of every other glory and every other excellence, till we have either discovered this great original of all that is excellent and glorious, or can give satisfactory proof that no such original exists. The bare possibility that there is a Being who stands related to us as our Creator and Father, renders it an act of base ingratitude, not to inquire after him, that we may fulfil the duties which those relations imply.

Admit then, that God is worth knowing; and you must also admit the inevitable consequence, that God is worth seeking. Indeed it would seem superfluous to dwell on either of these propositions, were it not that in our own little corner of God's universe, filled with a set of God's creatures, who style themselves reasonable beings, there are yet many who can find time to amass stores of human learning, time to perfect themselves in all the wisdom of this world, but no time or inclination to ask, "where is God, my Maker, who teacheth me more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh me wiser than the fowls of heaven?" However, let your actions be what they may; I do suppose your understandings will hardly refuse their assent to the proposition, that the knowledge of God, if we could attain to it, would amply repay us for any labor we might endure in the attainment.

Neither will you be disposed to contradict my next assertion, that whoever this glorious Being may be, the world is in a state of great ignorance and confusion respecting his nature and attributes, and the kind of duty and worship that is due to him from his creatures. A single glance at the various and absurd religions of mankind, may suffice to convince us, that God is not universally, or even generally, known upon the earth. Out of so many different gods, only one can be the *true* God. Out of so many different religions, only one can be the *right* religion. Perhaps you will say, *all* are equally wrong. Such an opinion does but add to the force of my proposition. Whoever God is, it must be alike obvious both to Christians and infidels, that the world in general knows very little about him.

If you agree with me in what I have said:—if you admit that God is worth knowing, and that he is worth seeking, in an infinitely higher degree than any thing else is worth knowing or seeking; and if you also perceive that mankind are in a state of ignorance concerning him:—you will deeply feel the importance of the inquiry I am about to propose. How, amidst this variety of conflicting opinions, shall I find out that which is right? Or, if all are in error, where shall the truth be sought? What possible means can I take to become acquainted with God my Maker?

Does reason, does common sense, suggest no answer to this inquiry? Do they not say,—"Apply for information to *the only Being*

who is likely to give it you? In plain terms: none can know God so well as he knows himself. Therefore *ask God.*"

This method appears so obvious, so direct and natural, that it is difficult to conceive how any one can object to it, or hope to propose a better. Yet it is this very method which infidels will neither themselves seriously try, nor permit others to try, if they can help it. Let a man address himself in good earnest to prayer, and they will immediately set him down for a person of a weak and shallow understanding, a mere superstitious driveller. Or, if he be known to possess a powerful and commanding intellect, then they will lament with a sigh of benevolent regret, that so great a man should be deformed by so great a weakness. But if the praying person should carry his extravagance to such a height as to persuade himself that God hears him when he prays, and gives him what he asks for;—by what name will they designate such infatuation? They waver between the terms of hypocrite and madman; or, perhaps, suspect that a combination of these characters was needful to conduct a man to such a climax of absurdity. And all this contempt is excited, because a reasonable being, actuated by a reasonable desire to know the Author of his being, and by a reasonable persuasion that none can teach him what he wants to know so well as that Author, avoids every indirect and circuitous method of obtaining the desired information, and applies at once to God for the knowledge of God.

Why should it seem so unaccountable to pray to God? Why so absurd to expect an answer to our prayers? I could let you into the secret cause of that mingled pity and disgust with which you regard those who pray. But for the present I forbear. My object is to prove to you that their conduct is not quite so absurd as you imagine. To apply to God himself for the knowledge of God, is a mode of proceeding perfectly just and rational. It is so, whether you regard the existence of God as certain, or merely admit it as possible.

For, in the first place, if there be a God, he must be in full possession of the information you require. *He cannot but know Himself.* He cannot but know himself *better than any other being knows Him.* He, therefore, who desires to know any thing about God, and would apply to one most thoroughly informed on the subject, *must apply to God.* This is inquiring at the fountain-head. All other plans, in comparison with this, appear indirect, far-fetched and unnatural.

2. It is also, reasonable to suppose, that if there be a God, *He must be capable of hearing all that his creatures say to him.* Whether they address him with their lips, or only in the secret of their hearts, they cannot be addressing an unconscious God. A God, and yet unconscious! The thing is impossible. "He who made the ear, shall he not hear?" He who formed the heart, shall he not know what is passing there? If we speak to God, the probability of his hearing us is the same with the probability of his

existing at all. On the other hand, the argument, if you can find one, which shall prove God to be unconscious of any thing that we say or think, will at once set aside the being of God altogether. There is no God:—or, God knows all that is in our hearts. One of these two propositions must be true. However partial and unworthy notions you may entertain of the Supreme Being, you cannot, in this enlightened age, imagine him to be ignorant of what is going on in a world of his own making. Should you, at any time, feel disposed to address him, you will not surely be deterred by the fear that he may be on a journey, and so out of the reach of your voice; or asleep, and therefore unable to listen; or perplexed and encumbered with such a multiplicity of affairs, that he will be too busy to attend. Despised Christianity has taught men to discard these idle notions. If, then, there be any absurdity in praying to God, it certainly cannot arise out of the circumstance of God's being incapable of hearing.

3. It is sufficiently evident, that if God be *able to hear* our petitions, he is also *able to grant* them, if he please. He who made our understandings at first, must be capable of illuminating them. He who gave us such capacities for knowing him, must be able to satisfy and fill up those capacities. We have already admitted that he must be fully possessed of the information we require. What should hinder him from conveying that information to us, if such should be his will? Do you say that our minds are incapable of being informed on so difficult a subject? You have no means of proving such an assertion. If you had, it would be no way to the purpose, unless you could also prove that God cannot render them capable. Does it comport even with your own ideas of the Deity, to affirm that he has expended the whole of his creative power upon the mind of man, so that he really can do nothing more to improve or enlarge it? As rational creatures, we *must* be capable of knowing our Creator; and God, as our Creator, *must* be able to convey to our minds the knowledge of Himself.

4. Again, we have every reason to believe, that as God is *able*, so he is *willing* to grant our petitions. You will, perhaps, tell me that it is presumptuous to imagine that a Being of such transcendent greatness should stoop from his high majesty to concern himself with the paltry concerns of men. Now, I conceive, that since it was not inconsistent with the dignity of God to make us at first, we are warranted to conclude, that it will by no means derogate from his greatness to care about us when we are made. It argues a kind of puerile inconsistency, rather than Godlike majesty, to make man, and then throw him aside, without further thought of what happens to him. But this objection takes its rise in a narrow understanding. Because you cannot attend to a great many things at a time, you should not think God cannot. Do not let comparisons of this nature mislead you. Be assured that God's power of attention cannot, with any propriety, be measured by yours. His mind can neither be oppressed by a variety, nor en-

cumbered by a multiplicity of objects. Witness this universe which he has created. Nor is his greatness of so perishable a nature, that it can receive an injury by stooping to the lowest or meanest object. The little dignitaries of the earth may fear to attend to little things lest they should appear incapable of what is great, or should really neglect it; for they cannot attend to the one without neglecting the other. It is not so with God. Do you say that he will not stoop to mind little things? Look around you. Behold what minute attention he has bestowed upon thousands of objects, which to us appear small and insignificant! See how curiously he has painted the wings of the butterfly! How softly he has pencilled the cups of the snow-drop! Let the little daisy, which you carelessly tread under foot, declare who shaped its many leaflets, who tipped them with crimson, and placed in the midst a circle of gold. Which of the birds has God forgotten to feed? Which of the insects, that dance in the sunbeams, has he left unfinished for want of time, or because of their insignificance? How has he descended from his majesty to give lessons of wisdom to the little ant and the bee! In the whole kingdom of nature, we cannot perceive one instance of hasty inattention, or of supercilious dignity. God has forgotten nothing. He has despised nothing. How can we conceive then, that he should forget or despise *us*! Why should the prayers of his rational creatures alone escape his notice? Why should their souls be too insignificant to attract his benevolent attention? Besides, what should induce you to suppose, that a soul is a small or valueless thing in the sight of God? Think you that he has laid out so much wisdom upon making and informing *a thing of little worth*? He has made us capable of knowing him. This marks our value in his sight; for nothing can be worthless, that is capable of knowing God. And it affords us a sufficient intimation, that if we ask God for the knowledge of which he has made us capable, he will be willing to give it to us. We cannot be accused of offering an unreasonable petition, when we desire only to know Him who made us; for without this knowledge, we might as well have been made in all respects like the irrational creatures.

5. But not only are we justified in supposing that God is willing to teach us; we have also every reason to infer, that he is *more* willing to instruct those who *pray*, than those who do *not* pray to him; to bestow his gifts upon those who appear desirous of obtaining them, rather than upon those who set on them no value whatever. For a creature not to seek the knowledge of his Creator, is a neglect which bespeaks him to be sunk in the most hopeless stupidity, and the vilest ingratitude. To revel in the gifts, and forget the giver, or to remember him with indifference; to thirst after earthly wisdom, and yet to have no ardent aspirations after Him who is the fountain of true wisdom; argues such gross perverseness and inconsistency, that we cannot much wonder, if God should leave those who are guilty of it, to grope in their own cherished ignorance. But to pretend that we aspire to know God, and yet to

neglect even the effort of asking Him to teach us :—this is indeed to add to all other crimes, that barefaced hypocrisy, which can scarcely impose upon men, and is openly insulting to God. Little as we know of this infinite Being, the secret instinct, which himself has planted in our hearts, may teach us, that he will not probably bestow his most precious gifts without some expression of desire on our part. He may reasonably expect that we should not show ourselves quite insensible to our need of this divine teaching, and may justly conclude, that what we do not choose to solicit, we do not desire to obtain.

But I think I hear you reply—"Shall I offer such an insult to the Omnipotence of God, as to imagine that he needs to be informed of my wants?" Who requires you to entertain so absurd a supposition? We do not tell you that prayer is necessary for God's information, but for your relief. He may know all your wants, and yet require that you should have a sense of them, and should express that sense to him before he will grant you a supply. He may know that prayer, as the means of softening, humbling, and purifying your hearts, is not the least pressing of your necessities. He who has made you capable of receiving consolation by pouring out your troubles into the bosom of a friend, may be willing that you should enjoy the infinitely superior relief of confiding your wants and sorrows to the ear of his mercy. None of these suppositions are impossible or improbable, even upon your own notions of Deity. Inasmuch as you believe that God is an exalted and a benevolent Being, they are far more probable than the contrary supposition.

You reason more justly on points which affect your temporal interests. You do not refuse to plough and sow, to plant and water, because God already *knows* that you want the fruits of the earth, and ought therefore to give them to you without your wearisome toil. You care not to spend many an anxious hour in the acquisition of useful knowledge, because God *knows* that it would be very useful to you, and is therefore bound to instil it into your mind without your pains. No: in these things your worldly interest or pleasure is concerned. You have a real desire for them. And therefore, instead of sitting down to philosophize on the part that *God* ought to take on the occasion, you immediately sit yourself to do what *you* can: and employ, without hesitation, whatever means seem best suited to your purpose.

Prayer seems to be the only direct and rational means of obtaining the knowledge of God. For there is no other being in the universe, to whom we can apply with such certainty of not being misled. Yet truly you will not pray to God, because he needs none of your information. If you really longed to acquaint yourself with God, the sense of your need would force from you the most earnest supplications: nor would you be at leisure to consider whether or no you were conveying to him a piece of gratuitous information. The heart that is touched with a desire to know God,

will be lifting itself up in prayer, while others are reasoning upon the propriety of so doing.

Again, although God is not ignorant how much we need to be rightly informed about him, yet the state of the world affords sufficient proof that he has not in all cases relieved this necessity. So that his perfect knowledge of our wants does not, as an inevitable consequence, and without any application on our parts, produce the relief of our wants. Besides, you have already waited some twenty, thirty, forty years. All this time God has been aware of your need of instruction. Yet you are still in a state of doubt and ignorance. Surely you have waited long enough to see whether God will grant a spontaneous relief to your necessities. It is now high time to employ *means* for the attainment of your wish. And since prayer has been shown to be the most likely and natural means, let me advise you at once to try what prayer can do for you. At all events, you will not then have to reproach yourself with having lost the best blessing in the universe for want of asking.

6. But, lastly, whatever be the result of your prayers, *they certainly cannot leave you in a worse condition than before*. For supposing even that God should refuse to grant your petition, it is of all things the most unlikely and inconceivable, that he should take a malignant pleasure in thwarting your desires, by giving you the very contrary of what you ask. Should he refuse to give you knowledge, he will not at least visit you with an increase of ignorance and delusion. The argument with which Jesus Christ urges this subject, if not divinely uttered, is, to say the least of it, the most wise, appropriate and convincing, that ever fell from the lips of man or angel.

*"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? IF YE THEN, BEING EVIL, KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS UNTO YOUR CHILDREN, HOW MUCH MORE SHALL YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THEM THAT ASK HIM?"**

The simple majesty of this appeal must find its way to every bosom. It must be felt by all, whose hearts have throbbed with a parent's love, or whose wants have been supplied by a parent's bounty. It applies to the ideas which the Deist entertains of God, as well as to those which are cherished by the follower of Jesus. According to your own notions (if notions you may be said to have, where all is so vague and indistinct), you reject with abhorrence the idea, that the God who made and who preserves you, is an *Unnatural Father*; who, with wanton cruelty, would thwart the noblest aim and cast down the most reasonable hope of his own offspring. Such a character of God is not to be found in the wildest ravings of impiety. Could any one *believe* this of God, despair would soon prey upon his existence. Yet this principle

* Luke xi. 11—13.

you indirectly maintain :—this solemn insult you offer to the character of God ; when you assert that *habits of prayer lead to enthusiasm*. Not only so, but you outrage the common sense and common feeling of mankind, which declare, as by an instinct implanted by the Giver of life himself, that a father *cannot* turn the petition of his child into derision. But you say, that the great, the original Father, can and does act thus in opposition to his own universal law. You say, that, when his children ask bread, he mocks them with a stone ; when they implore food, he offers them nought but the scorpion's venom. When a man, deeply impressed with a sense of his ignorance, asks of God the knowledge of his holy will ; no sooner does he betake himself to this way of gaining information, than you cry out, that he is possessed with the spirit of enthusiasm and delusion. The more earnestly and frequently he entreats God to give him light and truth, the more deluded you think him ; that is (*for it will bear no other interpretation*), you think that God derides the requests of his creatures, and forces them deeper into the maze of ignorance and error, for no other reason, but because they have stretched out their hands to Him to extricate them. Ye who profess to make reason your guide, tell me, was it *reason* that led you to this conclusion ? Where will you find in the Bible any mode of arguing half so absurd as this is ?

A brief recapitulation of the above observations may not be unnecessary. We have remarked, that God must be in full possession of the information we require :—that he must be able to hear us when we pray to him :—able to give us what we ask :—that we have great reason to infer that he is *willing* to hear and teach us :—*more willing* to teach those who *ask* him, than those who do *not* ask him :—and lastly, that, be the result of our application what it may, it cannot leave us in a worse state than we were in before. From all these things I infer, that to seek the knowledge of God by prayer is no absurd or irrational mode of procedure : nay more, that the expediency of prayer is in the same ratio with the probability of God's existence. Or, to accommodate myself to the lowest degree of belief ; the very slightest possibility that there is a God, affords an equal possibility that he may instruct us in answer to our prayers, and therefore renders the act of prayer reasonable and expedient. The saying of Jesus Christ—“ Ask, and it shall be given you :”—“ God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him ; ”*—is not only the voice of the Bible, but the voice of *reason*, the voice of *nature*, and, therefore, the voice of God.

But we have hitherto considered this saying only in itself. I propose, secondly, to consider it in connection with the book in which it is written, and to propose it as a fair and sufficient test of the truth or falsehood of that book.

It appears, from the common confession of Christians and Infidels, that the world is, to say the least, not very well furnished with the knowledge of its Maker. Nothing, therefore, which offers the

* Luke xi. 9, 13.

smallest hope of obtaining light upon this momentous subject, ought to be passed over without inquiry. A book has been handed down to us, professing to be a revelation from God to man, and offering him all the knowledge of which he stands in need. This book is by some blindly embraced, for the very same reason that would have induced them, under other circumstances, to have adopted the Alcoran, the Shaster, or the Zendevesta. Others profess to receive it upon rational grounds of conviction, and to hold actual communication with the Deity who is revealed in its sacred message. A third party reject the book altogether, and cast it from them with every mark of contempt. With these last I would now speak. Do not reject even the Bible, till you have put its truth or falsehood fairly to the test. But you say, "How are we to try it? all the evidence we meet with appears to us insufficient. We refuse to give credit to the writings of the Apostles. We never saw the miracles they relate; they are not, therefore, calculated for our conviction. Such things are contrary to our experience, shock our common sense, and we write 'imposture' upon them all. As for the revelation they pretend to have received from God; that revelation never came to *us*. We are in no respect benefited by it. If God will have us to believe as they did, he must reveal himself to us as he did to them. We cannot receive the thing at second-hand. When the God of the Scriptures shall favor us by revealing himself to us; when he shall afford us some infallible test whereby we may prove that his word is true;—then we will open our minds to conviction. But till then, we must retain our doubts upon the subject."

Such is the reasoning we repeatedly hear from the lips of Infidels. I will not now stop to admire the self-complacency, with which you boldly pronounce a thing to be impossible, because it has never happened within the little span of your experience; and unreasonable, because it surpasses the narrow bounds of your understanding. Neither will I pause to extol the spirit, with which, as a creature, you think proper to dictate to your Creator. Waving all consideration of the terms in which you express yourself, I admit the general truth of your proposition. I am persuaded, that you never will believe the Scriptures, till God himself "opens your understanding to understand the Scriptures." And I assure you that these same Scriptures contain abundant provision against the difficulties you have raised. They offer you ample means of proving, *by your own personal experience*, whether they be true or false. *That immediate revelation which you profess to desire, is actually promised to you upon the simple condition of your asking for it.* "Ask, and it shall be given you."^{*}

What is the gift here promised? It is no other than "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who shall guide you into all truth." "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. For if ye, being evil,

* See the Author's interesting and satisfactory application of this Test to her own case, pp. 64—67.

know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more shall your Heavenly Father give His HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask him?*"

TAKE JESUS CHRIST AT HIS WORD. The experiment is at once simple and decisive. Should it fail, you will then have some reason to reject the Bible. Truth, immutable truth, is one of the attributes which reason and Scripture concur in ascribing to God. We cannot form to ourselves the conception of a God who can lie. To divest God of his attribute of truth, is to strip him of his God-head; to bring him down to a level with ourselves. The Bible makes this a grand distinction between God and man: "God is not a man, that he should lie." "*He is ever mindful of his covenant*"—but they, *like men*, "have transgressed the covenant."^{*}

Here, then, the question is brought within a very narrow compass. If the Creator of the universe be the same God who is revealed in the Scriptures, he cannot but honor his own word of promise. He has *pledged* himself:—*he cannot but redeem his pledge*. Every attribute of the Deity binds him to the performance of his promise. His name, his great and terrible name, is dishonored forever in the sight of men and angels, if he fail to fulfil this word which is past, and cannot be recalled:—"God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Such is the Scripture account. If it be false, you have an easy way to detect its falsehood. If true, it is in your power to convince yourself of its truth. Put to the test this bold assertion. Ask your Heavenly Father to give you his Holy Spirit. If your prayer be granted, the Bible, with all its rich proffers of present peace and eternal happiness, will become your portion and reward forever. If, on the contrary, your *ardent, persevering* prayers should bring down no supplies of light and knowledge from above, then you may not only with great justice pronounce the Bible to be an impudent imposture; but you will be justified in doubting whether there be any God at all.

I would press this upon you, because *no external evidence*, however satisfactory, is of itself sufficient to produce conviction. The proof must be written by the finger of God upon your heart. It must be the result of your own actual and personal experience. "No man can say," from the heart, "that Jesus is the Lord, but by the *Holy Ghost*." If you believe in Jesus, it must be because God has revealed Jesus in your soul. This revelation is promised by God to all that ask him. Upon slighter grounds you ought not to believe such momentous truths. With less than this you ought not to be satisfied. Permit me, before I quit this subject, to urge you, by a few unanswerable arguments, to put the Bible to this test. The task might almost appear superfluous; but the perverseness of the human heart is beyond conception, and requires to be combated where it would be least suspected of resistance.

First, then, I would remark to you, that there is something in this saying, which stamps on it an air of conscious honesty and

* Numb. xxiii. 19. Psalm cxi. 5. Joshua vii. 11.

veracity. An artful person would hardly have committed himself so grossly. A liar would have hesitated to expose himself to such immediate detection. An impostor would not willingly have courted such close examination. Those who forge the current coin of the nation, are the least likely to furnish us with a method of distinguishing the counterfeit. If I wish to palm upon you a fictitious account of any person, that person himself would surely be the last to whom I should choose to refer you for the truth of my account. Still more absurd would such a reference be, if I knew that it was in the power of the said person instantly to detect and expose my falsehood. But the Bible gives you an account of God, and then refers you to God himself for the confirmation of that account. Nor is this one of those ranting, contemptible appeals to the Deity, with which men will sometimes seek to cloak their falsehood, or to vent their enthusiasm. It is a calm, sober, deliberate assurance; founded on the benevolence and wisdom of the Divine Being. Foreseeing all the doubts and difficulties which would obstruct the reception of his Gospel, Jesus himself vouchsafes to point out a ready way of arriving at the truth. He founds his arguments on the strongest and most universal principles of natural religion. Would you know whether he is indeed a teacher sent from God? He refers you to God himself for an answer. He declares to you that you cannot believe him to be the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. At the same time *He solemnly promises that his Holy Spirit shall be given to you upon your asking.*

Try now whether he is able to keep his promise or no. Whoever God is, he will not refuse to instruct you at your request. Or should he refuse, he will not at least lend himself to delude and ensnare you. Jesus tells you that his doctrine is the bread of life. Should it, on the contrary, prove to be nothing better than a stone or a scorpion, be assured that your Heavenly Father will not force it upon you, when you ask him for bread.

The next remark I will offer for your consideration is, that however secure you may think yourself in your rejection of Christianity, it is *possible* you may be mistaken. I say, *it is possible, that you may, after all, be in the wrong.* Not all your security can reach so far as to preclude this possibility; and what an eternity of despair does it involve! Your judgment is not infallible. If you think you have no proof that the Scriptures are divinely inspired, you know assuredly that you have no proof to the contrary. A mistake here is no trifling matter. You had better play the fool on any other subject than on this; for should things turn out contrary to your expectations, you will bitterly curse your folly. The idiot, the madman, may sport with this tremendous uncertainty. But the wise man will consider every possible contingency. I repeat, that it is possible your contempt of the Bible may be unfounded. Place this as far off as you are able. Still you cannot deny that it is *possible.*

Reflect now, I beseech you, on another possibility, which hangs

on the one I have just mentioned. *It is possible that you may one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* Should such an event take place, what excuse will you offer for having rejected the Gospel, when Jesus himself pointed out to you so simple and unfailing a test of its truth? Will you not stand condemned even in your own eyes? Will not conscience upbraid you with the incredible infatuation, with which you refused to give the word of God a fair trial? Say—will not your rejection of the test I now offer you, if—which God forbid! you do reject it—will not this be a dreadful aggravation of your crime? You cannot plead ignorance, when knowledge was offered you at so easy a rate. You cannot plead uncertainty when so ready a way of solving every doubt was pointed out to you by Him, who will then be your Judge. You might have asked and received. You might have sought and found. Then will you justly be left to ask and to seek in vain. Now Christ says, “Ask, and it shall be given unto you.” Reject his offer—and this very word which he has spoken to you, will judge you in that day.

Not only will you *then* appear without excuse before God; but, whether the Bible be true or false, if you refuse to try it by this criterion, you are *now* without excuse before men and your own conscience. Such a refusal speaks for itself. It says—“I love darkness rather than light, I will not come to the light, lest my deeds should be reproved.”* It “says to the Almighty, ‘Depart from me; for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways.’”† Such conduct is not founded in *reason*; for reason forbids us to condemn what we have not tried. It is not supported by *philosophy*; for it is *her* character to use every possible means for the discovery of truth, and the detection of error. It is not consistent with *honesty*; for what can be more dishonest than to plead the absence of sufficient proof as a reason for not believing; and yet, when that proof is offered, to decline taking the necessary steps for its attainment! It is easy to perceive the secret spring of a refusal, which is equally incompatible with the dictates of reason, philosophy, and honesty. You do not *wish* to have your prejudices removed. You have chosen error, and you hold it fast. You would rather not know any thing about him that made you. Self is your idol; and how can you desire to become acquainted with One, whose presence in your soul would destroy all self-pleasing, and self-exaltation forever?

However, we have a right to expect, that if you will not make TRIAL of the truth of Christ’s word, you will at once confess, that all your boasted candor and philosophy were mere pretences, held forth to conceal the reality of your enmity against God. Till you have tried this test, may not the terms, fanaticism and delusion, with far greater reason be used to designate your rejection, than our belief of Christianity?

Again, supposing the Bible to be false, you *lose nothing* by hav-

* See John iii. 19, 20.

† See Job xxi. 14.

ing brought it to this touchstone. The trial, if it should fail, will but leave you just as you was before. Nay, it will be so far an advantage that you will have the pleasure of detecting a bare-faced fraud, and will be effectually freed from those secret misgivings which you cannot now altogether exclude.

On the other hand, if the Scriptures be true, *how immensely will you gain* by the experiment! Instead of a few vague ill-defined notions of God, you will be able to say—"I know in whom I have believed;"—"this God is *my* God forever and ever;*" your short-lived participation of unholy inirth will be exchanged for "a joy with which no stranger intermeddleth"†—your cold and sullen fortitude, for a peace which the world can neither give nor take away—your comfortless prospect of annihilation, for a hope full of immortality.

The last consideration I shall urge upon you, is, that *this is the only fair test by which the Bible can be tried*. For if you refuse to be guided by this criterion, there is but one other to which you can possibly recur. You may, if you please, bring the Scriptures to the bar of human reason, and reject them because you find many things you do not comprehend, and many that you do not approve. But these grounds of rejection are insufficient.

For, in the first place, if the Bible be true, its Author is God. Now there is between your mind and the mind of God an inconceivable distance. It is extremely probable that many things may appear to His infinitely comprehensive understanding, in a light totally different from that in which they are viewed by your limited reason. To use the words of the Bible itself, it is possible that "God's ways may not be as your ways, nor his thoughts as your thoughts."‡ If then *His* Book should turn out to be somewhat different from the Bible which *you* would have written, I really do not see that this is a sufficient reason for rejecting it. Consider the vast difference of ideas which inequality of intellect creates between two beings of the same nature;—a child and a man. Set before a little child the Elements of Euclid, or the Principia of Newton. Will they not be foolishness to him? Or present him with the last debates in the houses of Parliament, and request his opinion upon the disputed point; the justness of the arguments in its favor, or the force of those that were opposed to it. Is he capable of forming a correct estimate of these things? But these are matters that do not immediately concern him. Well then, let me propose that you acquaint him with the plans you may have formed for his education and fortune; the studies he will have to pursue, with their different degrees of usefulness; the snares that will be laid for his youth, and the anxieties that await his manhood. When you have finished your statement, let the young reasoner be called upon to give his ideas on the subject, and point out how far your remarks meet with his approval. All this appears very absurd to you. But it is without comparison more

* 2 Tim. i. 12. Psalm xlviij. 14.

† Prov. xiv. 14.

‡ Isaiah iv. 8.

absurd to fancy yourself capable of judging of the authenticity of God's word, by its agreement or disagreement with your own most imperfect notions.

Notwithstanding the child's incapacity of judgment, he is in one respect a better reasoner than yourself. Strange and unaccountable as your sentiments must sometimes appear to him, he does not therefore reject them as absurd or untrue. He knows that it is owing to the imperfection of his own mind that things appear so differently to him from what they do to you. This feeling sense of his own inferiority is the best preservative from error. But you cannot bring yourself to confess that the judgment of God may often differ exceedingly from your judgment; nay, that they may be directly contrary the one to the other. You cannot condescend to be inferior to God, and to learn of God; submitting your mind to His, as a little child submits his mind to the mind of his father.

Yet between the understanding of the child and the man, there is no such great difference. It is but the distance between finite and finite; between worm and worm. But between man and God—between finite and infinite—between the mind that thinks and the mind that *creates* thought;—who shall calculate the difference? It is immeasurable, incomprehensible. Imagination would grasp at the idea;—but it is too mighty for her. We can but express it by another incommensurable distance—“surely as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts higher than our thoughts, and his ways than our ways.”* Poor, pitiful, narrow-minded creatures that we are! If God does but give to one of our fellow-creatures a mind a few degrees greater than our own, we can scarcely judge of, or appreciate that mind, by reason of our own low and short-sighted prejudices. Yet we presume to think of measuring the Infinite, of comprehending the incomprehensible mind of God! We bring the Omniscient down to the bar of human judgment; and insist upon his expressing himself according to our weak and varying notions of propriety!

It is not then any argument against a book said to be written by God, if it should contain many things above the reason of man. For we are infinitely less capable of judging of what ought or ought not to be the mind of God, than an infant is to decide upon the thoughts and counsels of the most eminent statesman or philosopher.

But you will perhaps reply, that, supposing you had written a book expressly for the use of your child, you would have taken care to accommodate it to his capacity; and that it is reasonable in like manner to infer, that if God had written a book expressly for our use, he would have stooped to the narrowness of our understandings. I admit the justice of your inference. But permit me to make another supposition. Put the case that you had written a book for your child's use, and that you were to warn him beforehand that he would find many things too difficult for his unassisted comprehension; which things, if he would ask you, you would render

* See Isaiah iv. 9.

perfectly intelligible to him. Would the child then have reason to complain that the meaning of the book was obscure to him? Surely not. Now this is what the Bible assures you that God has done. He has written a book for the use of men, which, by reason of their imperfect and incorrect views, they cannot of themselves fully understand. He has told them, that if they will ask of Him, He will make it plain and intelligible to them. Whether this account be true or false, can only be ascertained by making the experiment. It seems at least worth trying.

But again, we have two books besides, which we know can have no other author than God—the book of Creation, and the book of Providence. Do these contain nothing difficult to be understood, nothing that we cannot easily reconcile with our ideas? Rather—do we not meet with obscurities, not to say apparent contradictions, in every page?

Is not the book of Nature incomprehensible? How unaccountable to our ideas, that the burying of a dry, diminutive seed should be followed by its resurrection in the shape of a lovely flower, or a stately tree! How strange that one day should behold the lifeless caterpillar wrapped in a winding-sheet of its own making, and the next should present it to us winged with life and beauty, the gayest of the fluttering creation! There is not in the whole book of Nature a single line that is legible to us from beginning to end. We can read enough to wonder and adore, but not enough to understand.

And as for the book of Providence, are not its contents still more dark and mysterious? Does it not contain ten thousand articles, which to our weak judgment appear absolutely inconsistent and contradictory? How often are the righteous visited with one affliction after another, while the wicked are not in trouble as other men! “They are full of substance, and leave the rest of their treasure to their babes;” but the righteous are poor and oppressed. These are some of the seeming incongruities of the book of Providence. They are by no means the most remarkable. To us it often appears a succession of paradoxes.

If now a third book be offered to us, even the Bible, professing also to be from God; shall we deny that it is genuine, merely because it is marked by the *very same* peculiarities of style, which distinguished the other works of the same Author? Surely this remarkable coincidence of style is any thing rather than an *objection* to its authenticity.

When you object to the Bible on the ground of its being opposed to your *reason*; we have yet another cause to doubt, whether reason is at all to be relied on in the matter. For if you look round upon all the kingdoms of the earth, and observe the absurd degrading notions which men entertain of the Deity, you will perceive that the human mind is little capable of forming sublime or even reasonable notions concerning him. As you too profess to be guided by unassisted reason, you can scarcely be sure that your

ideas of God may not be just as remote from the truth as those of the ignorant savage, who says to a stone, "Thou art my God." You will tell me, that you have the superior advantages of an enlightened philosophy, and a cultivated intellect. I fear this argument will not stand you in much stead. For what were those gods, who, in the opinion of the enlightened and cultivated nations of Greece and Rome, "in High Olympus ruled the middle air?" They were a set of mere men, loose and unprincipled men; with rather more than human power, and less than human virtue. These enlightened and philosophical nations conceived "that God was altogether such an one as themselves." If your ideas are more rational than theirs, it is not because you are naturally better informed than they were; but because some of your notions have been refined from the grossness of their sensuality by that despised system of theology, the Bible. Their example may warn you how little *reason* can avail us in searching after the Almighty. A few of the wisest of them perceived that they were wrong, but confessed that all their philosophy was insufficient to find out what was right. With these, the Maker of the universe, if not Jupiter or Saturn, was still "the unknown God." Yet they had the same reason to guide them; the same helps (unless you will acknowledge the Bible to be a help), that you have in the present day. Can you tell us why you should hope to succeed, where they so egregiously failed? Reason, in the case of every nation in the world, has proved a blind guide; can you tell us how it comes to pass that she should, in your individual case, prove so wonderfully clear-sighted? May not the ideas of God which reason has taught you, be just as wide of the truth as her suggestions to the Heathen nations, whom she persuaded to "change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things?"* And if you cannot be sure of the correctness of your notions, is it safe to reject the Bible, merely because it does not coincide with those notions?

Once more; if you repeat that you cannot believe the Bible, because its contents appear absurd, if not contradictory to you: we reply, that *this is no more than the Bible itself has foretold*. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are *foolishness* unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."[†] Let me again put the case home to your own experience. Suppose you had written a treatise on some particular subject, and had distinctly and repeatedly declared, that to a certain description of readers, destitute of a certain degree of information, your book must, from the very nature of the thing, be incomprehensible, and even wear an appearance of glaring absurdity. Would you not think yourself unfairly dealt by, if your performance were to fall into contempt, because those very persons whom you had declared incompetent to judge, were to assure the world that they had read it, and found it both obscure

* See Romans i. 23.

† See Corinthians ii. 14.

and ridiculous? But let us further suppose, that you had not only forewarned these people of the incapacity they labored under, but had also pointed out a method, by which they might acquire sufficient knowledge to enter into the meaning of your work, and to estimate it at its real value. Would you not accuse them of tenfold disingenuousness in decrying your production without giving themselves the trouble of examining it by the method you had proposed?

Is not this disingenuous, this unphilosophical proceeding, the very counterpart of your own conduct with regard to that book, upon which, for any thing you have yet proved to the contrary, your eternal happiness or misery may depend? The Scriptures offer themselves to you as the word of God. They assure you that sin has so blinded and depraved your reason, that you are incapable of affixing a just meaning, or a true value, to their sacred contents, until that reason is informed and enlightened by the Spirit of God. They instruct you how to obtain this divine illumination—"Ask, and it shall be given you."

Now let us observe your mode of proceeding. You set about judging the Bible by that very faculty, which the Bible has declared to be incapable of judging correctly. This you do, in the face of the united testimony of every age and nation, to the utter incapacity of reason, as a guide to religion. You not only neglect, but absolutely despise the offer which the Bible makes you of divine teaching: though common sense, common feeling, and experience concur in proclaiming its necessity. And then, with consummate assurance, you step forward and inform the world that you have *fairly examined* the Bible, and proved it to be a mere cunningly-devised fable. Is this fair and open? Is it just and reasonable? Is it wise and judicious?

It appears, then, from the vast difference which must be supposed to exist between our minds and the mind of God; from the analogies that we may gather from His Creation and Providence; from the confusion and ignorance of the whole world respecting him; and from the account which the Bible gives of its own nature and purpose; that the unassisted reason is not capable of deciding upon its truth or falsehood. The criterion is absolutely unfair and inapplicable; alike condemned by common sense and common honesty. A deaf man is no very accurate judge of sounds; nor is a blind man adapted to decide upon the merits of a picture. Even so is human reason utterly incapable of discerning the beauty and glory of the sacred page, until the same Almighty Power which created that reason, is pleased to shine into and enlighten it. Now, if there is the smallest hope that so great a blessing may be had *for the asking*, what perverseness will it argue on our parts, to decline making the attempt!

That I may preclude every possibility of misapprehension, let me add a very few words as to the *nature* of this asking or prayer, and the *answer* which may be expected to it.

And first, as to the nature of prayer. I need hardly tell you

that it must be *sincere*. No promise is made to the mere asking of the lips. You may *thus* ask wisdom of God, and when he makes you no answer, you may triumphantly declare that the Scripture promise is broken. This may pass current with your fellow-men. But it will neither deceive yourself nor God. Conscience will bear witness that you have not *really* prayed. The Searcher of hearts is insulted by such lip petitions. To grant them, would be to part with his Omniscience.

Nor is it enough that the desire after knowledge be *sincere*. It must also be *fervent*. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine the one without the other. For if we desire a thing in proportion to its value, then, by how much the knowledge of God is better than any earthly knowledge, by so much ought the fervency with which we long for it, to exceed the fervency of our desires after any earthly object. The soul that is really thirsting after her Maker, her God, the proper centre of her desires and hopes, will thirst after him with a degree of ardor and fixedness, of which no earthly longing can convey an adequate idea. The hungry man fainting for want of food; the thirsty traveller languishing for water; these are but poor and inexpressive emblems of the soul that is hungering and thirsting after God. To desire God coldly, and other objects with eagerness, is such an inversion of the right order of things; it is so immensely to undervalue the only things which cannot be prized too highly, that we can hardly, without arrogance, expect that God will condescend to such faint desires, or fulfil such luke-warm petitions. I believe that the faintest wish, *if sincere*, will not pass unnoticed by Him who "despiseth not the day of small things." But if our longings after such an unspeakable good be not intensely excited, we have every reason to question their sincerity. To desire God without intension, seems more inconsistent than not to desire him at all. We may desire a trifle faintly: for our wish is in proportion to its value. But to desire the living God; the Original of all wisdom, excellency, beauty, glory and felicity; and yet not to burn with uncontrollable longings of the soul after Him; this is an anomaly, which can only be met with in a guilty and fallen world; and it proves at how low a rate the very best and wisest of mankind do value God. The Spirit of God must both excite and satisfy this longing. The more we ask, the more we shall desire, and the more we shall be satisfied.

I conceive then that this asking implies *sincere* and *fervent* desire. It is the asking of the *heart*, and to such *only* is the promise made. "*Then shall ye seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*"*

Suffer me now to direct your attention for a moment to the *answer*, which may be expected from such asking as I have described. On this head I have two brief cautions to offer to you.

1. You have a right to expect a *convincing* answer to your prayers; but you have no reason to expect that it will be *miracu-*

* Jer. xxix. 13.

lous. I do not mean to say that God cannot, if he please, convince you by a miracle. This, however, is not his ordinary method of dealing with his creatures. He who once brought light out of darkness with the word—"Let there be light"—now sends forth "the sun every morning like a bridegroom out of his chamber,"† and he gives light to all the world in the ordinary course of nature. So He, who caused the first beams of the Sun of Righteousness to shine miraculously upon mankind, now illuminates the hearts of men by the ordinary process of inward rational conviction. It is fitting that it should be so. We are reasonable creatures; and our *understandings* must be convinced, ere our *hearts* can be converted. No outward miracle can effect this; but only the inward miracle of opening the heart to attend, and the mind to understand; of dispelling the dark mists of ignorance, prejudice, and error, that benight the soul; and above all, of eradicating that enmity to God, which is the secret and bitter root of all unbelief. Perhaps what I am now saying seems strange and mysterious to you. I will enter no further into the subject. Only try the experiment I have proposed to you, and you will understand all this, and much more.

I would, in the second place, caution you not to expect an *immediate* answer to your prayers. Here again, we may gather, from the analogy of God's dealings with us in temporal things, some idea of what we are to expect from him in spiritual things. Every process in the works of Nature, and in the development of mind, is carried on by slow and sometimes imperceptible degrees. We sow our seed; but we must wait with patience, till His sun and His rain have brought it to perfection. Yet we do not the less confidently expect an abundant crop, because we know that it will not spring up in a single night. Again, in acquiring any of the arts and sciences, how many tedious processes we have to pass through. Yet we are not so foolish as to throw them aside in despair, because we cannot master them in a few hours. And reasoning from analogy, we have no ground to expect that the knowledge of God will be the growth of an hour; or that so mighty a blessing will be showered down at the very first request we deign to offer. Consider, I beseech you, how long God has been waiting upon you with this invitation. Wonder not if he keep you waiting for a time in your turn. But this will be as He pleases. I only mention it, lest any who have really begun to pray should feel discouraged at perceiving no immediate benefit from their prayers. God has nowhere promised to answer us so suddenly. But He will not keep us waiting without bestowing on us so much light and strength as will encourage us to persevere. "O tarry then the Lord's leisure; be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."†

I close this part of my subject, with the advice of the prophet—"Halt no longer between two opinions." If the Jehovah of the

* See Psalm xix. 4, 5.

† Ibid xxvii. 14.

Scriptures be God, serve Him ; but if the God whom Deists have fancied to themselves be God, then serve him. I have pointed out to you a way of deciding the question. Bring the Scriptures to the touchstone of truth. "THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYER, LET HIM BE GOD."*

"Ask, and it shall be given you." Ask *sincerely, fervently, perseveringly*. If you *thus* ask, and receive not—I consent that you shall renounce the Bible forever. If you ask and receive, then will the Bible become your cherished guide, the very joy and rejoicing of your heart. Then will you bless the day that led you to the "Test of Truth."

* 1 Kings xviii. 22—24.

THE TEST OF TRUTH.

PART II.

ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU.—*Luke xi. 9.*

I CANNOT behold a person who doubts or disbelieves the truth of Christianity, without feeling drawn towards that person with a tender interest, as if he were my brother or dear friend. My heart is linked to his by an irresistible sympathy. Should this appear mysterious, I can easily explain the mystery. I have been in the same situation myself. I “know the heart” of an unbeliever; his doubts, his objections, his disgusts, have all passed through my own mind. I enter into every particular of his feelings. If he is a *sincere* doubter—I mean, if he really desires to find out the truth, I can comprehend all the agony of suspense, the horror of approaching eternity in the dark, which he now experiences, and which none but those who have felt can figure to themselves, even in idea. But my sympathy with such a doubter is also one of glad anticipation. I enter into his *future* feelings, and rejoice in the light and peace which are certainly prepared for him, though now they are hid from his eyes. I know that “an understanding shall one day be given him, that he may know him that is true.” “If any man wishes to do the will of God, *he shall know of the doctrine*, whether it be true or whether Jesus Christ spake of himself.”* Of this I am assured, both because it is God’s promise, and because He has fulfilled that promise to me. “He has brought me out of the horrible abyss of doubt and unbelief, and set my foot upon a rock, and established my goings.” And O that while I endeavor to speak of His goodness towards me, “many may see it, and fear, and put their trust in the Lord!”†

I thank my God that I have been permitted, by bitter experience, to enter into this growing calamity of my fellow-men. Not only have the doctrines of Christianity been stamped upon my soul with a certainty greatly enhanced by the strict and suspicious scrutiny, to which they have every one been subjected, but an intenseness is added to my prayers, and a liveliness to my hopes, for this class of wanderers from God, which nothing but a fellowship in sin and

* John vii. 17.

† See Psalm xl. 1—3.

suffering could have produced. I can spread their miserable case before the Lord, with the happy conviction, that the same power which was displayed on my behalf, is ready to be stretched out on theirs. And when unbelief whispers—*Can these men be brought to the knowledge of the truth?* my very soul burns within me, as I appeal to my own experience, that nothing is too hard for the Lord. May the Lord my God guide my heart and my pen, whilst I attempt to delineate the process by which “he called me out of darkness into his marvellous light!”

My chief aim is to demonstrate the success which will invariably follow a sincere and candid application of the “Test of Truth.” If I can persuade others to try the same method, I shall have gained my point. I seek not to answer objections. They are innumerable as are the turnings and windings of the human heart. Even with those who are sincere in their search after truth, the most trivial of these objections, though confuted again and again, will present itself with renewed difficulty. The *source* of doubts and objections must be dried up. The “evil heart of unbelief” must be removed. He who will make trial of the “Test of Truth” shall have a ready answer to all objections. He shall know by *his own experience* that every word of the Bible is true.

To you, doubters and unbelievers of every description, I address myself. Many of you will esteem me a fool for my pains. I am content that you should think thus of me, so long as the wisdom of God is foolishness in your eyes. But God often “chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.” This emboldens me to hope, that, if you will give me a candid and patient hearing, I may, with his blessing, be able to suggest some reflections which may prove useful to you. As God has opened my understanding, so I believe that he is able and willing to open yours. If once he shines into your hearts, how will unbelief, and pride, and prejudice, give way before the brightness of his presence! How joyfully will you submit to those deep counsels of God, which you now cast from you with scorn! I did not learn them of myself, neither can you. “Flesh and blood cannot reveal them unto you;” but my Father and *your Father* which is in heaven both can and will, if you desire it of him. I look with confidence on your behalf to Him, whose office it is to “lead the blind by a way that they knew not; to make darkness light before them, and crooked paths straight.”*

From a very early age, my mind had been deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of religion. I knew something, not only of the form, but, as I thought, of the *spirit* of prayer. With a very indistinct view of many of the doctrines of Christianity, I aimed to do all my duties in sincerity, and without any considerable external declension during the greater part of my childhood, and the commencement of a riper age.

Nor can I now speak decidedly as to the time or manner, in which a kind of careless stupidity about every thing connected

* Isaiah xlii. 16.

with religion began to steal over my soul. When this first became perceptible, it occasioned me great uneasiness. But I soon forgot it in the studies and vanities incident to my age. Ere long, I had learned to live "without God in the world,"—to shut him out of all my thoughts. Pride and self-love, which had, I doubt not, long been secretly cherished, now became the motives—the allowed and cherished motives—of all my actions. My former feelings were at first remembered as an indistinct dream, then erased from my memory. It may appear strange, that one who had ever tasted in any degree of the power of religion, could so soon cast off its influence; for all this was effected in the space of a few months. It is strange; and it affords a proof of the strange depravity of the human heart, when left to its own workings. Yet as this book may come under the eye of some who have fallen in the same manner, I will, for their sakes, endeavor briefly to trace the origin of my declension. Similar causes may have operated in producing theirs.

I think that I had no sufficient view of the nature and universality of sin. The sin of particular actions and thoughts would often affect me very deeply. But I had little idea of the general sinfulness of my nature, and of my own utter helplessness; or at least that idea had some time been growing very indistinct. In consequence, I set my guard, as it were, against this or that particular sin, instead of taking the whole body of sin to God to be subdued and destroyed. I am inclined to believe that other young persons besides myself, have derived injury from some parts of a work, which has, on the whole, been eminently useful; I mean Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." I had read in that work, long before the period of my thorough declension, an earnest recommendation to the young convert to enter into a solemn covenant with God by a written form or dedication. I drew up an instrument of this kind, and fancied I had bound myself to God's service in such a way that I could now never forsake him. But when I found myself daily coming short of the resolutions I had made, I began to be filled with a kind of slavish dread of God. I could no longer come before him as his child. I felt as if I had, by breaking my own voluntary covenant, dissolved or weakened the bond which united me to him. Again and again I sought his presence, and with tears renewed my engagements; but every renewal of this formal dedication was made under circumstances of fresh discouragements, and with diminished confidence in the strength of Christ to carry me through the performance of it. Thus I gradually declined from the law of liberty into the spirit of bondage and fear. I believe that these ineffectual struggles paved the way for my apparently sudden and lamentable dereliction. Whenever self-dependence creeps in, there is reason to expect that we shall be left to discover, that self is a broken reed, which can but pierce and betray the hand that trusts to it for support.

But I purposely hasten over this period, the mention of which

was necessary to throw some light over the future part of my narrative. The state of things I have described, could not last long. I became dissatisfied with the pleasures and pursuits in which I had promised myself so much gratification, and began again to wish to turn to religion for comfort. But alas! I had no longer a religion. I had refused to give glory unto the Lord my God; now "my feet" were left to "stumble upon the dark mountains;" I had forsaken the Rock of my Strength. I was now to try the firmness of my own sandy foundation.

The doctrine of the divinity of Christ had before been occasionally a source of doubt and perplexity to me. It now became odious to my proud heart, and utterly shocking to my carnal reason. To satisfy myself on this point, I examined the Bible again and again. The result was an entire conviction, that if there were any truth in the Bible, Jesus Christ was the self-existent Jehovah. But so great was the difficulty I had in consenting to this doctrine, that I immediately began to doubt *whether there were any truth in the Bible*. I suspected that a system of religion which involved such apparent absurdities, could not possibly come from God. Determined to sift the matter to the utmost, I eagerly acquainted myself with the arguments for and against Christianity. My *understanding* was convinced that the Scriptures were Divine. But my *heart* refused to receive the conviction. *I was unwilling to believe.* The more my reason was compelled to assent to their truths, the more I secretly disliked the doctrines of the Bible.

At length I resolved for the present to lay aside the subject altogether. I persuaded myself, that there must be many flaws in the evidence for so strange a history, and that, if I had not as yet penetration to discover those flaws, it was only on account of my youth, and the immaturity of my reasoning powers. It may be thought that my former religious sentiments would leave behind them a relish and inclination for the tenets of Christianity. On the contrary, they seem to form a great, an insuperable obstacle. It is evident, thought I, that I have hitherto been living under the unresisted dominion of prejudice. These opinions were imbibed before I could possibly form any judgment upon their truth or falsehood. I have ever since blindly submitted to their guidance; endeavoring to feel or to fancy all that the advocates of enthusiasm told me I ought to feel. I must guard against this bias, which my early associations have induced, from the very same cause I should probably in another country have stood forth the zealous worshipper of Brahma, or the furious disciple of Mohammed. Thus I reason with myself. Alas! I knew not then, that the secret, yet determined bias of my heart was *against* Christianity. I had forgotten that "the carnal mind is enmity against God."

I looked then upon my former devotion as the dream of an idle superstition. This circumstance was perpetually recurring to my memory, and redoubled my suspicions of the creed in which I had been brought up; so that, humanly speaking, there was no sys-

tem of religion, which had so little hope of a candid examination from me as the Bible. I will not at least be the slave of prejudice. I will not wear these trammels merely because they were imposed upon me in my childhood. I will think and examine for myself.

The following considerations restrained me from communicating my perplexity to a single being. In the first place, I thought that to whomsoever I might open my mind on the subject, they would not fail to endeavor to bias me one way or the other. In the next, as I was not quite sure that the Scriptures were false, I feared to be the means of raising or confirming doubts in the minds of any other person, lest I should ultimately discover that I had been fighting against God. I therefore resolved to keep my own counsel ; to exhibit, for the present, no outward difference of conduct : only avoiding, as much as possible, the discussion of religious subjects. In the meantime I determined to devote myself to those studies, which tend most eminently to invigorate the reasoning faculties, and give to the mind a habit of sound thinking and correct judgment. Thus I hoped some future day to renew the examination, take a clearer view of things, and effectually guard against being made the dupe of a "cunningly-devised fable." Vain and presumptuous fool ! I had yet to learn that, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God;" and that man cannot, by "his own unassisted searching, find out the Almighty to perfection."* Yet, even in this circumstance, I would gratefully recognize the wisdom and goodness that have followed me all my life long ; for though my studies were now but an additional snare to me, yet they afterward, under God's blessing, were of considerable use to me in my researches after truth : or rather in enabling me to detect the fallacies which had misled me. But, at present, I was trusting in them ; and how could they be otherwise than a curse to me ?

These abstruse pursuits had an effect on my mind which I had not anticipated ; but which, at the time, occasioned me little regret. I began to delight in them so much for their own sake, that they withdrew my mind altogether from the grand subject of my inquiry. Instead of using them as a preparative for future examination, I fled to them as a refuge from the busy speculations which had so long tormented me. I buried thought in them, as the drunkard buries it in his cups : not that I could, at all times, shut out serious reflection. These fits of mental intoxication had their intervals ; and bitter intervals they were. But I pacified conscience with the plea, that I was only laying aside inquiry to resume it under more favorable circumstances. When I should deem myself fit for the momentous scrutiny, was a point reserved for decision at some indefinite period. On one or two occasions, I experienced a return of religious feeling ; and felt inclined to submit, though with the temper of a slave rather than of a child, to the yoke of the Gospel. But at these times, a temporary dread of consequences, or that undefinable softness of mind which affliction induces, operated much

* See 1 Cor. iii. 19. Job. xi. 7.

more than any heart-felt conviction of the truth. I sought to appease conscience by doing many things. I was busy, but not devotional : and my fit of ill-judged zeal soon evaporated.

With the exception of these transient interruptions, I continued this course for many months ; but at length God in mercy arrested my downward progress : and the reflections of a few hours produced a total revolution in my views and desires, though I was yet to wait a long time ere I arrived at the knowledge of the truth. I had been looking out on the starry heavens ; and from the consideration of these wondrous luminaries, was naturally led to reflect on the immense stretch of intellect, by which man has been enabled to make them the objects of his knowledge ; to measure the distances, the orbits, the circumferences of the planets ; to trace the eccentric path of the comet, and foretell the period of its return. In an instant—with the rapidity, but not with the transientness, of the lightning's flash—the thought broke in upon me—“ *What signifies the knowledge of all these things, so long as man knows not God who made him !* ”

I had never sunk so low in the scale of being, as to entertain a suspicion that I could exist without some great Intelligent Cause and supporter of my existence ; and yet the conviction that there was a God, now seemed to flash upon me for the first time. It was as though I had gotten a new idea, and a new sense to perceive it by ; and this idea was so tremendously awful and important that it well nigh overwhelmed me. The amazing folly and brutish stupidity of mankind, and of myself in particular, in taking pains to acquaint ourselves with the works of God, and yet crawling on in contented ignorance of God himself, appeared so utterly shocking to common sense and common decency, that I could scarcely believe my own existence in such a world, and amongst such a race of fellow-madmen, to be any thing more than a frightful dream. At first, I could only behold the folly, narrowness, and meanness of my conduct. To have loved and sought what is beautiful in the creature, and yet not to have cared to be acquainted with the Original, the Fountain-head of beauty—the Mind, from whence every form of loveliness emanated, and which must itself be the perfection of beauty : to have admired the grand and sublime, without casting a thought upon Him whose mind is the birthplace of sublimity and grandeur : to have dwelt with rapture on the wisdom of my fellow-creatures, without seeking to know him who gave them this general wisdom, as a little drop out of the infinite ocean : to have examined and pored upon the workings of my own intellect, without inquiring after the Father of intellects—“ the God of the spirits of all flesh : ” and to have admired the exquisite formation of the body without asking by *whom* it was “ so fearfully and wonderfully made : ” to have forgotten the Giver in his gifts—the Creator in a minute portion of his works : to have embraced the shadow, and rejected the substance : idolized the copy, and despised the original ; provided for time, and neglected eternity !—Could a creature

so grovelling, so alive to all that is petty and mean, and so wrapped in a dull and senseless indifference to all that is great and worthy—could this creature be styled a rational, a thinking being? And was this *man*, in whose exalted intelligence I had but now been glorifying? Oh, far more gross than the brutes which perish! For the “very ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib;” but man hath an owner—a master—a Creator; and he knows nothing about Him! and he is *content* to know nothing about Him! If the works of creation be so beautiful and glorious, how surpassing in beauty and glory must be the God of creation! The mind which created my mind, and myriads of other minds—and which, still unexhausted, is ready to produce myriads more—is this mind worth knowing? or is it not worth knowing? or rather, who but an idiot would care greatly about knowing any thing else? How low, how impertinent, how wide of the purposes, are the pretended dissertations of men upon truth, and wisdom, and knowledge? Why do they not seek truth and wisdom and knowledge in Him in whom they all centre? Why seek them in the little streamlets of the world, when they might go to the Ocean, the Fountain, the Original? Do men *know* that there is a God? Have they the slightest suspicion of the fact? Can they know, and not care? Can they suspect, and not lay all things aside till they have ascertained? Can they think or talk of any thing else, so long as this point remains undecided?

But what have I myself been about all this time? How is it that I am but now beginning to ask—“Where is God my Maker?” I feel my want of God as though it were a new thing; as though I might not have known all along, that this was the great, the only want of a rational creature. It seems as if a thick mist had passed from before my eyes; as if, after a long and dreadful madness, I were just restored to sanity. And surely it must be thus. I have been laboring under a madness, a delusion: now I am awakened to a perception of the object of my existence. God is the object of my existence. There is nothing worth knowing, there is nothing worth caring for, but God. O that I knew how to find out God!

But while I was thus looking back with amazement at the folly of my conduct, another and a more appalling reflection came to deepen my perplexity. This was the *wickedness* of my conduct. My unnatural and monstrous ingratitude stared me in the face. If there be a God, then to endeavor to know and love and obey Him, must be not only the happiness, but the indispensable duty, of his creature. The ties of blood, the dearest relations and amities of life, must be a mere cobweb thread compared with the ties which ought to bind the soul formed, to Him who formed it—the relationship which must be naturally supposed to exist between the created, and the Creating Spirit. Have I not done my utmost to sever those ties? Have I loved God? Alas! how could I love an unknown being? But have I *tried* to know Him? What were my former endeavors? Let me not mock God by calling them endea-

vors. They deserve not to be once named as the act of a soul aspiring after its God. My life should have been one continued act of obedience and thankfulness; but I have scarcely thought of inquiring into his commands, or of reflecting upon his mercies. The true object, and motive, and centre of my soul must certainly be the love of my Creator. But I have in some way or other lost sight of this, and found out for myself an object, a motive, a centre, altogether sordid and abominable, and this is no other than the love of self. If I have never broken out into any open wickedness; if I have kept up a tolerably correct and amiable appearance to my friends, it has been solely owing (at least for many months past,) to a sense of shame, or an inordinate self-esteem. This taught me to put on a fair and decent outside; but within all was hollowness. The inward abominations of my heart have been indulged without a scruple. I have drank up *heart*-iniquity like water. If I have hitherto escaped the reproaches of an accusing conscience, it has been because this same principle of self, while it rendered me exceedingly sharp-sighted to the defects of others, blinded me to my own.

I now clearly perceived two things; that sin was the cause of all the misery in the world; and that the essence of sin, however different in kind or degree, was the same, and consisted in a general habit of averseness or alienation from the great Author of our being. Moreover, I saw that this sin pervaded every particle of our natures and every moment of our lives. The mere moralist appeared to me the most daring sinner, the most senseless invertor of things. For he presumes to boast of his performance of the little duties of life, while the great duty, *the one duty*, is left out of the account. How ridiculous to imagine that we can be good parents, children, subjects, when we are not good *creatures*! This is to suppose that a watch will go well, when the main-spring is broken; or a stream flow, when its source is dried up. Now, the sins of my life seemed to pass in review before me. I perceived that their peculiar malignity consisted in this—that they proceeded from a soul regardless of its Maker. Let what would be the action, enmity to God was the sin of it. My acts of unkindness and neglect to my fellow-men, struck me as so many demonstrations of despite or indifference to Him who gave them being. It was not as they were *my* fellow-creatures, but as they were *His* creatures, that I was bound to love them, and bear with them, and do them good. Had I loved the Creator, my love to his creatures would have been a matter of course, “Against *Thee*, *Thee only*, have I sinned!”* Against *Thee*, my Maker, my Preserver, my benevolent Friend, my tender Father! Thou hast made me, and clothed me, and fed me, and given me a heart to love, a soul to think, and a mind to understand: but I have not loved *Thee*, nor thought of *Thee*, nor known *Thee*! What wonder if the malignity that was rankling in my heart towards *Thee*, should sometimes break out towards thine off-

* Psalm li. 4.

spring ! for I now clearly perceive that I could never have disliked any thing of Thine, had I not had a secret dislike to Thee. Of what good has my existence been to the world ? None, absolutely none. What has been the end of my actions ? To gratify self. Have I secured this end, paltry and miserable as I now perceive it to be ? No, certainly ; my experience up to this moment wrings from me the bitter acknowledgment, that I have succeeded only in making myself miserable. What then is the reason of my failure in the search after happiness ? What can it be but this, that God, the Essence and source of happiness, has been left out of my system ? God alone is sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul which he has made ; and I am destitute and empty of God.

But judging of this great Being by the indications and glimmerings of the reason which he has lighted up within me, is it possible for a moment to entertain the thought that he can behold with complacency a creature like myself ? Reason teaches me that he is just ; otherwise how could he govern the world, which his consummate wisdom has created ? If he be just, shall he not punish one who has lived in the neglect of the most obvious and indispensable obligations to him ? My ignorance of Him is no excuse ; for conscience witnesses that it has been in some measure a contented ignorance. I have not taken half the pains to know God that I have taken to know objects of trifling importance. My utmost efforts and desires have been so utterly incommensurate, I will not say, with the worthiness of the object (for that is past my conception), but even with the faint and imperfect ideas which I might have formed of its worthiness, that to plead them in excuse would be the highest aggravation of my crimes. If then justice be one of God's attributes, that attribute must be engaged to punish any unnatural attempt to banish Him from his own creation ; to depose Him from his natural supremacy over my heart. Nor can I hope to escape with a slight punishment.—Justice consists, not only in awarding retribution, but in suiting it to the nature and degree of the offence. Mine is an *infinite* offence ; committed against an infinite Being, to whom I was bound by infinite obligations. Shall not the retribution be infinite ?

Besides, I have only to open my eyes, and look on what passes before them every day, to behold manifest tokens of the indignation of God against a "world that lieth in wickedness." Has he not hidden himself from our knowledge ? Are we not all abandoned to a sort of natural blindness and ignorance of all that pertains to him, and can there be a more decisive indication of his displeasure ? This earth,—who can help perceiving, that it lies under circumstances of banishment and alienation from its Creator ? Would God form beings capable of knowing him, and then leave them in ignorance of him, unless they had in some way or other forfeited his favor ? Do not the various contradictory religions, with which the world is filled, prove it to be in a state of the grossest ignorance and uncertainty about

God? What are all the infirmities and diseases which attack mankind, but a proof that sin, besides having ruined and debased the soul, has deranged and withered the body? What are all the fierce altercations and demoniac passions which desolate the earth, and make it like hell, but a manifestation of the most just vengeance of God, which has left us to wreak our quarrel with him upon one another, so that one half of the human race seems to be made for the scourge and executioners of the other half? What shall we say of death itself, but that it demonstrates our whole substance to be so contaminated, that it must be taken to pieces, and built up afresh, before it can be purged from the deadly contagion? Add to this, that the ordinary commerce and discourse of men prove them to have an internal consciousness that all is not right between God and their souls. When a hypocrite would invest himself with the semblance of religion, does it ever occur to him to put on an air of cheerfulness and hilarity? Does not the very inflection of his voice become whining and dolorous, as if that were the only tone suited to the occasion? Whence is this, but to accommodate himself to the general idea which men have of religion, that it is a burdensome and melancholy thing? To what cause shall we attribute the almost universal prevalence of sacrifices in the heathen world? Whence could men derive the idea of propitiating God's favor by the slaughter of an innocent animal? Does not this custom imply the idea of an offended God? Does it not originate in a hidden sense of sin—in those secret gnawings of conscience which exist in the breast of every human being, and which lead them to think of God as an angry God? as One whom it is necessary, by some means, to reconcile and appease?

But we may find ample proof of this fact, without going out of Christian countries; or even out of the limited circle of our own friends. What occasions the prevalent idea that religion is a melancholy thing—incompatible with youth and good spirits—a subject of too gloomy a cast to be admitted into general conversation? Who has not witnessed the dead silence, the air of uneasiness and constraint, which the introduction of a serious reflection will sometimes spread over a whole company? What a woful interruption to their hilarity! Politeness itself will scarcely restrain a contemptuous smile, or a bitter sarcasm, at the expense of the meddler who ventured to obtrude the offensive and ill-timed observation. He is directly marked as *not one of them*; and should he again attempt to introduce the subject, he will be regarded, in every festive society, as an intruder. But, if we were *satisfied* that there was *peace between us and God*, the mention of religion could never be offensive or ill-timed—because religion would then be nothing but the continual expression of mirth and gladness,—the chosen and ever-pleasing topic of our most joyous moments.

I have thrown my reflections into this brief order, without at-

tempting to follow them out exactly as they occurred to me ; which, at this distance of time would be impossible. They darted in upon my mind—first one, and then another, and sometimes many of them together, with a rapidity and force, which has made me since wonder that I retained the perfect possession of my senses ; and yet with so much clearness, that the substance of them is now impressed on my memory with the distinctness of facts, rather than of thoughts. Nor can I say, whether this train of thought was the work of one night ; for the same reflections pursued me with little alteration for many days. These, then, with many considerations of a similar nature, which I cannot now so distinctly recollect, but particularly the continual sense of my own gross ignorance and enormous corruption, filled me with the deepest distress ; and compelled me to feel, to my great discomfort, that there was a separation—a quarrel between God and his creature. I found, in my heart, a contrariety to Him which I was unable to repress. Again, I asked myself—how shall I, a miserable reptile, sustain my controversy with the Omnipotent ? Or stay His avenging arm, which is ready to visit on me the whole weight of His just indignation ? If I, who am accustomed to wickedness, and hardened in it, yet know enough of what is right to abhor and despise myself; in what light must I appear to his all-holy and unclouded judgment ? Put the case now—that He should be willing without satisfaction required, to pass over my offences, to forgive me for what my own conscience (planted by Him) condemns me. What would be the consequences of this clemency ? I should no longer reverence or esteem Him: ceasing to be just, He would cease to be God in my eyes. I can no more suppose God without justice, than I can suppose man without a soul. This attribute is essential to His character as Governor of the universe. I should despise a fellow-creature, who should govern so unjustly and weakly, as to suffer criminals to escape without paying the penalty due to their crimes. Such a one's laws would be trampled upon, and his person treated with as little regard, as was paid to the fabled Log sent down by Jupiter.

Even then—upon the monstrous supposition that God, the just God, who has in so many ways manifested His indignation against sin, could, in my favor, be induced to slacken the reins of his government, and throw away the sceptre of his justice—I should gain nothing by this, but the galling sensation of being under the yoke of One not greatly better than myself, or at least quite incompetent to his high office as Judge of the whole earth.

On the other hand—if God punishes me, I am involuntarily led to fear and hate Him. To love a being, whose glory is concerned in my destruction, is impossible. How shall I reconcile these two opposite ideas ?—the justice and mercy of Him, who is at once my Governor and Father ! If God pardon my sins, he is not a *Just God* ; that is, He is no God at all. If he do *not* pardon sin, at least in those who desire to return to Him, this is contrary to what

nature herself suggests to me of His goodness and mercy. Each alternative is unspeakably appalling. To have to do with a God who weakly swerves from the demands of justice; or to be in the hands of One, who by letting justice have her perfect work, should shut the door of mercy upon mankind. Yet the former of these alternatives appeared to me incomparably the most dreadful! I had, within these few hours, acquired such a perception of the beauty of holiness, that the thought of an unholy God was worse than hell to me. I felt that I had rather God should pour out on me all the vials of his wrath, than that, carried away by an unworthy softness and weakness, He should forgive, and thereby encourage sin: for sin appeared to me in so odious a light, that if it could not be purged out of God's universe without the destruction of mankind, who by sinning had deranged its order and defaced its beauty, my soul was almost ready to acquiesce in the general destruction, and to perish in it, so that the order and beauty of God's universe might be restored. To undergo eternal punishment was horrible indeed. To acknowledge an unholy God was scarcely less horrible!

Besides all this, I plainly perceived, that, supposing even there were any means of restoration to God's favor—I should be continually falling from it again, unless a total change were wrought in my whole temper and disposition. I saw not how this change was to be effected. I had experienced so much of the weakness of my best resolutions, that had an offer of pardon been held out to me upon the condition of promising not to offend again, I should not have dared to make that promise. Sin had "separated between me and my God." This sin was not an act which I could lay aside—a habit which I could shake off; but it was a nature. How was I to change my nature? God, who made me at first, could alone correct the dreadful disease, which had so mixed itself up with my whole constitution, that it seemed to form part of myself. But to this God—how should I apply? or what reason had I to hope that He would not leave me to the consequences of my own wilful rebellion!

In this dilemma it occurred to me, as a last expedient, to turn my attention once more to that despised book, which had been long laid aside as incapable of affording me the least relief. How different was the temper of my mind in which I now addressed myself to its perusal, from that which I had read it in the commencement of my disbelief of Christianity! I was no longer a proud sophist, triumphing in the strength and penetration of human reason, and in the comprehensiveness of human knowledge. The contemplation of my own ignorance, weakness, and wickedness, had laid my pride in the dust. My eyes were opened to view myself as I really was—depraved and blinded in my reason, judgment, and understanding. And this is the process, *which must take place in the soul of every man, before he can pursue the search after truth in a right spirit.* He must esteem himself "a fool, that he may be

wise."* not that he must part with any portion of his rational faculties ; but, having been a fool all his life long, he must be led to discover and acknowledge his foolishness, before he can so appreciate wisdom, as to search for it with his whole heart.

My attention was soon powerfully drawn by the promises which abound in the Bible, that God will reveal himself to all those who diligently seek him. When I read these, it struck me that the Bible itself offered an infallible test—more sure than all the arguments that ever were written for and against it, to prove whether it was indeed the Word of God or the word of man. To own the truth, I was at first startled by the unqualified nature of these promises. The authors of these books, if impostors—and which I still inclined to believe them—had pledged themselves in such an unguarded manner, as must inevitably lead to their detection. Here is an engagement—or a pretended engagement on God's part, to perform a miracle in favor of any one who chooses to ask it of Him. For what can be a greater miracle than to give the knowledge of himself to a soul that is ignorant of Him? This is the very essence and substance of all miracles. Other wonders and signs may be disputed. This *must* bring conviction. I cannot persuade myself that the Author of this Book will be able to redeem His pledge ; or to realize the expectations which he has so confidently held out. Nevertheless I can but make the experiment. I shall, at least, forever rid myself of whatever doubts I may have entertained respecting the origin of the Bible. "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find." "He shall give his Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." "Then ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search after me with your whole heart."† Can words speak plainer? Well, I will ask—I will seek! If what I ask is given me ; if I find what I seek—what can I want more to convince me that the Bible is the Word of God? If what I ask is *not* given! If I do *not* find what I seek—I may safely conclude that the Bible is a very awkwardly-contrived lie ; and, as such, I will cast it from me with contempt. Be this, however, as it may—I can lose nothing by making the trial ; possibly I may gain much. Whether he who made this promise be God or man, his reasoning is full of judgment and good sense. For who *is* to give us the knowledge of God—if God himself either cannot, or will not give it to us? Since "the father will not give his son a stone when he asks bread"—since *evil men* "know how to give good gifts to their children," how reasonable is the inference, that *the good God* must "know how to give good gifts unto His offspring!" I will apply to my unknown—my heavenly Father. I will ask Him to give me the knowledge of Himself. Will he mock me with a delusion? Will he present me with "a scorpion" when I "ask Him for bread?" I will implore Him to teach me to believe what is *right* concerning Him. Supposing the Bible account of Him to be *wrong*, will he thrust this *wrong* belief upon me, when I am asking Him for a

* See 1 Cor. iii. 18.

† Luke xi. 9—13. Jer. xxix. 13.

right one? Is He indeed so unlike a parent? It was He that fashioned a father's heart, and implanted a father's feelings. Is it too much to suppose that He himself has the heart—the feelings of a father?

The sense of my guilt held me back for a time. I feared that the great Being, whom I was about to address, would not listen to the prayer of one so worthless; but I reflected, that a state of submission and desire could not be so displeasing to Him, as one of carelessness and rebellion. To lay myself low at his feet with the deepest prostration, and to implore mercy, was all that I *could* do in my present ignorance; and since mine was no longer a wilful ignorance, I hoped that Infinite Benevolence might in time extricate me from it.

One thing was sufficiently clear—man was not able to help me to what I wanted. God alone was able to assist me. It remained for me to try whether he were *willing* to save a soul that was perishing for “lack of knowledge.”

Impelled by these reflections, fearful and uncertain, but with uncontrollable—unutterable longings, I directed my supplications to the “*unknown God*.” O my Redeemer! the first breathings of my soul were not uttered in thy name. I rushed into the presence of my Judge, without a Mediator: but, doubtless, even then thy comeliness was thrown over the deformity of my soul, and the eye of my Father beheld me with pity for Thy dear sake! My prayer ascended up to heaven fragrant with the incense of thy merits—though the poor wretch who offered it, thought to please God by leaving Thee out of it! Let thy goodness and mercy to me encourage other poor ignorant souls, who are groping their way to God in the dark, not to desist from the search till they have found Him; and having found Him, they will find Thee—and having found Thee, they will hold Thee fast; or rather, Thou wilt hold them fast to all eternity!

Thus I set my face in good earnest, to seek the Lord, my God. Every other employment was not only laid aside, but forgotten. I confessed to Him, that I was unworthy of the least of His favors which he had heaped upon me: yet I ventured to tell Him, that all these were of no value in my eyes, except as they encouraged me to hope for some further manifestation of his goodness. O God! (I dared not say, *my* God—the word died upon my unhallowed lips)—Thou hast given me a wondrous power of knowing; but there is but one thing worth knowing; and of that I am ignorant—I would know Thee. My capacity of knowledge is no better than a curse to me, while the only thing worthy to satisfy that capacity is hid from me. Thou—Thou art the true object of knowledge! O let me know Thee—or let me know nothing! Thou hast given me a power of loving; but in vain I look round for something to love. Thou canst fill my heart—and none but Thou. But Thee I cannot find: and there is some wretched principle within me which will not let me love Thee. O Thou, who art all lovely, re-

store me to the natural perception of a creature ! Bring back my alienated affections to their true centre—that I may see and love Him who gave me birth. Thou hast made me capable of boundless longings and desires—but the whole earth would not satisfy those longings ; no, nor the whole universe, unless I could find Thee in it. Oh ! why didst thou put within me such high and restless aspirings, if I was indeed made for so low an end as to live and die without knowing Thee ? Thou gavest me the appetite of hunger—and lo ! ever since I was born, Thou hast supplied me with food to satisfy that hunger. Dost Thou care for the wants of the body ? and wilt thou not provide for the wants of the soul ? Now my *soul* hungers, which it would never have done, hadst not Thou formed it capable of spiritual appetites. Wilt not Thou give the food that must satisfy my *soul* ? Will the God, whose goodness prevents every *bodily* want, leave me to perish in my *spiritual* necessities ? The power of thought—the ardent and ineffable breathings of my mind, are but so many aggravations of my misery. The very light of reason only serves to make my darkness visible, to discover to me how low I am fallen ! These Thy great—Thy peculiar blessings, are just so many curses to me—so long as I am shut out from thy knowledge and love. I know that I am not worthy ; but *nature whispers to me that thou art merciful*. I see no way of becoming reconciled to thee ; but reason teaches me, that Thou mayest be able to find out a way, though I cannot. Life is not life, unless I know the Giver of it. All the time that I have lived without Thee in the world, I seem to have been dead ; more senseless than a stock or stone—more brutish than the beasts which perish !

Such things as these I groaned out of the fulness of my heart ; for I was seldom able to speak. My deep self-abhorrence, and the inexpressible ardency of my desires, choked up the way to every outward expression of my feelings. I often lay prostrate on the ground for hours together—not from any superstitious preference of that attitude ; but because the sense of my own unfitness to come into God's presence quite overwhelmed me. I should have sunk *into* the earth, had that been possible ; so great was the prostration of soul occasioned by the perpetual consciousness that God was present, and that I was unworthy.

In this manner I gave myself wholly up to seeking for my Creator. For days and weeks, I however sought him apparently in vain. My blindness and uncertainty seemed to increase daily. I was often on the point of abandoning, in despair, an effort so unpromising—and wished for death, as the only thing which could terminate my afflicting suspense ; but then it occurred to me, that the Bible has nowhere promised an *immediate* answer to prayer. The experiment, therefore, was not a fair one—unless it was persevered in : nay, I recollect that so far from promising an *immediate* answer, it gives repeated intimations that we may perhaps have to wait a long time for the accomplishment of our desires. It warns

men that they must "tarry the Lord's leisure"—that "they must pray, and not faint":* besides this, I could not deny, that God had long waited patiently for me, and borne with my careless unconcern. It was reasonable that I, in my turn, should wait patiently for God ; and not abandon the search, when perhaps a little further perseverance would end in the realization of my most sanguine wishes. I knew too, that I was in pursuit of an object worthy of the intenseness of my desires ; and which, when found, would amply recompense any labor I might expend in seeking it. I therefore continued my entreaties, that God would graciously vouchsafe to open my understanding to know Him, and my heart to love Him as a rational creature ought to do.

I waited not in vain. God at length revealed Himself to my understanding in a way that abundantly surpassed my expectations—I say to my *understanding*; for this was no rapturous trance of enthusiasm, but the sober and rational conviction of every faculty of my mind. I hope none of my readers will think that I attribute too much power, or too much benevolence to the Supreme Being, when I assert that He who first gave me understanding, did enlighten that understanding in a manner which I was sensible no efforts of my own could have done ; and which yet was so clear—so consistent—so satisfactory, that every former act of my reason, in comparison with this, seemed like the incoherent ravings of delirium ! If however, they doubt—let them try the experiment for themselves: nor let them suppose that this was a sudden flash of conviction—no, it was a process as collected and deliberate as that by which the mind first scrutinizes, and then embraces the propositions of mathematical science. My eyes were opened to discern the glory and excellence of the Scriptures, and their amazing superiority to every human composition. I perceived that they carried, within their own pages, a witness to their Divine Origin. Convinc'd by this internal evidence, I recognized in the Bible the revelation of God to his fallen creatures. In this book alone, I saw perfect justice and perfect mercy—perfect holiness and perfect clemency, reconciled in a way worthy of the Diety ; and though I know that this internal evidence cannot be perceived but by those whose eyes God himself opens to behold the wondrous things out of his law ; yet trusting that he will, in some instances, thus "confirm the word of his servant," I will endeavor to comprise, in as short a space as possible, the points which struck me as most worthy of observation during this (to me) memorable perusal of the Sacred Oracles. Again I remind my readers, that the correctness of my assertions can only be proved by bringing them to the touchstone of Truth. If God did indeed teach me, he must be also willing to instruct them. Let them try whether he is able to keep this promise : "Call unto me, and I will answer thee ; and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not!"†

1. The character given of God in the Scriptures, appeared to me

* Psalm xxvii. 14. Luke xviii. 1.

+ Jer. xxxiii. 3.

such, that no finite mind could have conceived or portrayed it. Here is nothing of the imperfection—the inconsistency—the littleness of humanity. All is majesty and infinity! No one attribute obscures or encroaches upon another. Here—and here only, we have a God glorious in holiness—inelastic in justice—that will not look upon iniquity: and yet slow to anger and of tender mercy, justifying the ungodly, and teaching sinners in the way. Well and truly did the apostle describe the scope of the Gospel in these terms: “And this is the message we have heard of God, and declare unto you, that *God is light; and in Him is no darkness at all.*” No—there is no darkness in the Scripture representation of God; but when *men* attempt to form conceptions of His character, for want of the comprehensive vision which so mighty a subject requires, they cannot look at one of His attributes without losing sight of another. Thus they can form some faint idea of His justice, or of His mercy, separately: though even that is a justice and a mercy limited and defective like their own. But their narrow minds cannot grasp the United Idea! They form some rude conjectures of the separate parts; but the mighty—consistent whole, is quite beyond their largest thought. Therefore it is that some fancy to themselves a God who is all justice, and no mercy: while far the greater part imagine Him to be all mercy and no justice: or, at least, fondly persuade themselves that he will put His justice by, whenever it happens to interfere with their convenience. God is merciful, deluded man! but His mercy is not like thy mercy—it is neither a weak, nor an unholy principle; nor will it avail thee aught, if thou diest in thy sins!

Thus man cannot describe one of God’s perfections without marring another; but the Scripture takes them all into the account. His justice—His mercy—His holiness—His compassion, all meet in perfect unison, and their jarring claims are sweetly reconciled in Christ Jesus. This was exactly what I wanted, but had scarcely hoped to find. This was the God whom I had longed to call “my God!” Now I could say, “*my God!*” Now I could call Him “Father and Friend!” Now I had a forgiveness extended to me, which, far from involving the horrible compromise of God’s holiness, which I had fancied necessary before He could pardon me, was itself “the beauty of holiness:”—was such a manifestation of God’s sanctity and of His hatred to sin, that in the very act of showing mercy, His justice and His holiness were most gloriously vindicated.

2. The character of Jesus caused me fresh transports of admiration every time I contemplated it. How many writers have wearied themselves in the attempt to describe a perfect character! and how miserably have they all failed! Now here was an undertaking ten thousand times more arduous: so bold that the very conception of it could scarcely have entered into the limited capacity of man. It was no less than this—to delineate the character of One who should

be at once "perfect man and perfect God"—"God manifest in the flesh."

And how do they attempt to embody this magnificent conception? What splendid description shall convey to us the boundless ideas, or astound us into a belief of its reality? What learned definitions shall mark the points of the character they have chosen to portray? Do they seek to dazzle us by placing their hero in an exalted rank, and surrounding him with every circumstance of magnificence? Do they make him run a long career of glory, adorned with the highest advantages of honor, valor and learning? Quite the contrary. They give us the very plain and simple history of a man who passed his life in a poor and mean condition, surrounded by enemies who spared no pains to crush and disgrace him, who would have been overjoyed to discern the least defect in his extraordinary character. He is born in a manger; educated as the carpenter's son; lives in poverty and contempt as an itinerant preacher; and dies an infamous death between two thieves. The ignominy of his life and death, the low esteem in which he should be held by all, were portrayed beforehand with so much exactness in the sacred books of the Jews (books confided to the care of the Jewish priests, his bitter enemies,) that many infidels have been converted to Christianity, by comparing the prophetic writings with the Gospel History; and the Jewish Rabbins, unable to evade their force, have been constrained to prohibit the reading of one chapter in particular (Isaiah liii.) under the severest denunciations. The coincidence between the prophetic life and character of Jesus, and his real life and character, struck me forcibly. These were not prophecies of which it could be pleaded, that they were written after the events they described; for not only have we certain proof to the contrary, but we know that the Jews would be very glad of such a plea, and yet they have never ventured to make it. Nor can it be said that the accomplishment was forced and strained to suit the prophecy; for the most striking points of coincidence consist of facts over which an impostor could exercise no control, or traits of character which were very unlikely to have occurred to him. Again, supposing the Gospel to be an invention, here was another difficulty of no common magnitude which its authors had to encounter. Not only had they to describe this perfect twofold character, but to make it naturally fall in and accord with divers accounts scattered here and there through a series of books written at very different times, and in very different styles of description. Surely if the Gospel be a lie, it is the most ingenious lie that ever was invented, and its writers must have had longer and clearer heads than fall to the lot of impostors in our times.

But to return. I scrutinized again and again every part of this divine character, represented with so much plainness, and under such unfavorable circumstances. But after all my scrutiny, I could not find, I will not say a fault, but not even so much as an inconsistency in the character of Jesus. To describe a character with-

out any glaring defects, is a comparatively easy task; but to describe one which should be consistent in all its parts, appeared to me utterly impossible to a being so inconsistent as man. Especially a character so singular as this, whose distinguishing points are directly contrary to the distinguishing points of man's character in general. Like the Pharisees, (though, I trust, in a far different spirit,) I lay in wait to "catch Jesus in his words."^{*} Often did I fancy that I had met with something at which I might reasonably be offended. But that Holy Spirit, who had already begun to take of the things of Jesus and show them unto me, always led me in the end to perceive that the offence was occasioned by my own gross ignorance and vitiated judgment of spiritual things. As each difficulty was successively cleared up, my admiration arose almost to ecstasy; and my doubts were lost in a deep and loving confidence, till at length, after many of these trials, I could, when any thing seemed strange to me, go to Jesus himself, and sitting down at his feet as a little child, expect from him a solution of the mystery. I no longer exclaimed, this is contrary to *reason*, I will not *believe*:—but, this surpasses my *comprehension*, I cannot *understand*; Lord, teach thy foolish and ignorant creature what this means! The more I studied this divine character, the more I grew up, as it were, into its holiness and simplicity, the more my understanding was enabled to shake off those slavish and sinful prejudices, which had hindered me from appreciating its excellence. Truly his "words were dearer to me than my necessary food."[†] He became unto me "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."[‡] He was my "all in all." I did not want to have any knowledge, goodness or strength, independently of him. I had rather be "accepted in the beloved," than received (had that been possible) upon the score of my own merits. I had rather walk leaning on his arm, than have a stock of strength given me to perform the journey alone. To learn, as a fool, of Christ, this was better to me than to have the knowledge of an angel to find out things for myself. Nor is there any thing in all this contrary to reason. For as the highest wisdom of a little child is to learn implicitly of its teacher; so I, having found a teacher and guide, whose intelligence was above mine or the angel's, not as a man is above the child, but "as he who maketh a house is greater than the house." it was my business to learn implicitly of him, and to submit my mind to his, secure that I should thus attain the highest end of a created being.

But I turn back for a moment to the reflections which possessed me, when first the beauty, consistency and majesty of the character of Jesus began to be evident to my mind. I asked myself, Who had invented this character? A company of ignorant fishermen? Or supposing we will not allow them to be the authors, still the language and style of the writings may prove to us, that they were the composition of unlearned men, incapable of any effort of

* Mark xii. 13.

† Job. xxiii. 12.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 30.

intellect beyond that required to tell a plain unvarnished tale. But grant even that they were men of learning and genius: still it appeared to me, that to believe the life and character of Jesus to be the invention of any merely human intellect, required a far greater stretch of credulity, than to believe that he was "God manifest in the flesh." Those indeed who can persuade themselves that this world and all its curiously contrived machinery were the work of a blind chance, may conclude that the character of Jesus was traced by a mere mortal pen. But those who attribute any thing to a divine power, must, we should think, perceive in this, manifest tokens of a divine power. No intellect short of an infinite intellect could have conceived the mighty thought. No pen uninspired by that intellect could have embodied that thought in the life of an obscure individual. Were I to assure you, gentle reader, that the immortal work of Newton was composed by a child at the breast, you would smile at my simplicity. But I am ready to weep at the violence you offer to your reasoning faculties, when you can lay your hand upon the life of Christ, and pronounce that to be the production of any human mind. Yet remembering that your reason is blinded by the deceitfulness of sin, and that I was once as blind as yourself, not even this excess of prejudice can damp my hopes respecting you. I lift up my heart to God, who opens the blind eyes. In the meantime, though now you "see no beauty in Jesus that you should desire him," yet I beseech you, for the sake of truth and candor, to give his character in the Bible your serious consideration. There is a divine power and excellency in it, which may find its way to your heart when you least expect it. And if ever "God shines in your heart, to give you the knowledge of the glory of God," that glory will be revealed to you "in the face of Jesus Christ."*

3. The Scripture character of man struck me as differing exceedingly from that given in any other book. It was evidently no portrait of his own painting. Every other book represents man more or less as he ought to be. The Bible alone depicts him as he really is. All the systems of all the philosophers; all the religions of all nations, are founded upon the supposition, that the heart of man is not altogether corrupt, that a little mending and patching only are wanting to bring it to perfection. One lauds the dignity and rectitude of human nature. Another talks of the sincerity of our endeavors, and the efficacy of our resolutions. What say the Scriptures? "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."† If you patch new cloth upon the old garment, you will only make the rent worse.‡ Of our dignity they say, "the crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned."§ Of our rectitude and sincerity,—"ye are estranged from the womb; ye go astray as soon as ye are born, speaking lies."|| Of our endeavors,—"without me ye can do nothing."¶ Of

* See 2 Cor. iv. 6.
§ Lam. v. 16.

† Jer. xvii. 9.
|| Psalm lviii. 3.

‡ See Matt. ix. 16.
¶ John xv. 5.

our resolutions,—“ye are not sufficient of yourselves to think any thing as of yourselves.”* They stoop not to flatter the pride and vanity of man by false and hollow encouragements. They go to the root of the evil. They tell him the plain truth; that he has neither rectitude to choose; nor sincerity to love; nor energy to resolve; nor strength to execute that which is good. “They are sottish children, and have not known me; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”† What I had been led to discover of my own heart, corresponded with the declarations of Scripture, as exactly as when “a man beholdeth his natural face in a glass.” I will say more. This book discovered to me so many new enormities of which I was before ignorant, that I could not help exclaiming at every page: Surely, He only who searcheth the heart could so accurately describe its dark and intricate movements! Surely none but He who made man could know so well what was in man!

Now, in any case of bodily disease, it inconceivably enhances our confidence in a physician, if, while he describes to us the symptoms of our case, we perceive that our feelings exactly tally with every part of his description: we indulge a reasonable hope, that he, who has so thoroughly acquainted himself with the symptoms of our complaint, will be able to suggest a remedy. Thus it was with my spiritual malady. I found every particular of my sufferings, my necessities, my blindness, obduracy and depravity of heart, laid down in the Bible with such extraordinary and felicitous precision of language, that from that time *my own words* seemed quite inadequate to the description of my case. I could recollect none but *Scripture* words, when I wanted to define my feelings: all other words seemed poor, feeble and unmeaning. As a person who has long been laboring under sensations which he is unable to describe, if he lights upon an exact delineation of them, will exclaim—“Ah! that is exactly what I wanted to say; only I could not find words to express it in”—so in reading the Scripture description of the sin and ignorance of man I was continually forced to cry out, “Yes—my experience is the very counterpart of this! only it is expressed with a force and appropriateness, which no language of mine could have reached.” It will not appear wonderful, that, lighting upon this astonishing accurate definition of my wants and distresses, I should be disposed to give a very serious and attentive consideration to the remedy proposed for them.

4. I was greatly struck by the Scripture account of the nature or essence of sin. Other codes and systems content themselves with reprobating a few of its exterior indications: the Bible goes straight to the heart, and drags its hidden motives to the light: other systems make the essence of sin to consist in the violation of our duties to man; the Bible makes it consist in the violation of our duty to God. These speak of the neglect of human—or natural laws and rights; the Bible allows of no law but the law of God—

* Cor. iii. 5.

† Jer. iv. 22.

no right but the right which God has in us as his creatures. It tells us that all sin is comprised in our alienation from Him in whom all subordinate duties and relations centre. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thine heart.*" This is the first and great commandment. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is the second; like unto the first, dependent on it, naturally and necessarily flowing from it.* To violate the first and great command, this is sin. To violate the second is the inevitable consequence of breaking the first; for no one ever yet hated his brother, who did not first hate God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God."† This is the deadly root whence every lesser abomination proceeds. All that human ingenuity has ever effected, has been to lop off some of the minor branches, to prune a few excrescences, but which have immediately sprouted forth with redoubled vigor. The Bible lays the axe to the root of the tree. The catalogue of our crimes always begins with this damning article, and is usually summed up in it—"In transgression and lying against the Lord, and departing from our God;"‡ this is the sum and substance of our offence. This separates between us and God: this has brought the curse into every one of our dwellings. Other sins are but the puny offspring of this horrid and unnatural progenitor.

The Bible statement is the only one in the least consonant with unbiased reason and sound sense. For if there be a God at all, he must have a greater right in his creatures than any other being can possibly have. To serve and love him supremely must be that law, which alone deserves to be called the law of nature; and if men universally love and delight in any thing else more than in him, they stand universally condemned of living in a state of contrariety to the law of nature: that is, they frustrate the true end of their nature; they are guilty of that unnatural dereliction from duty, which constitutes the essence and malignity of sin.

5. The Scripture remedy for sin and all the evils it has brought in its train, was so consummately adapted to my necessities, that this circumstance would have alone sufficed to rivet my attention. Sensible that I was in a state of alienation from God, I was afraid of his just vengeance, and yet more afraid, that in pardoning sin he should prove a weak and unjust being like myself. If I rejected the idea of an angry God, an unholy God seemed my only alternative. I saw not how infinite compassion itself could save me, but at the expense of infinite justice and purity. Those only who have known the agony of feeling themselves condemned by God and their own conscience, can comprehend the joy with which I hailed the glad tidings, "that God can be just and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."§ My wretched and unnatural state with regard to God, consisted in three particulars. I was ignorant of God—averse from God—and afraid of God. Jesus Christ revealed the Father to me—took away the enmity—and

* Matt. xxii. 37—39.

‡ Isaiah lix. 13.

† Rom. viii. 6.

§ Rom. iii. 25, 26.

opened a way of access with boldness and confidence. I understood how "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."* O the depth, the wisdom, the harmony of my Father's counsels, as "the Spirit took of them" for Christ's sake, "and showed them unto me!" O the exceeding glory and excellency of my Father's character, as I studied it in him, "who is the brightness of the Father's image, in whom dwelleth all the fulness in the Godhead bodily!"† Then I perceived how the doctrine of "the cross, while to some it is a stumbling block, and to others foolishness, is nevertheless to those who are saved, the power of God and the wisdom of God."‡ In the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, I beheld the love of God manifested, his law exalted, his justice satisfied, and my salvation complete. I knew by my own joyful experience, "that God has given unto us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son."§

Poor infidel, whoever thou art, my brother or sister in sin and misfortune! cast not these pages from thee as the ravings of enthusiasm. Scoff at them I know thou wilt, unless the Spirit of God arrest thy heart as he did mine. But remember that they are written by one who once held the same sentiments with thyself. Consider that so wonderful a revolution in these sentiments could not have been effected, and persisted in, without some reasons for such a change. I have told thee how I came to the knowledge of what I believe to be the truth. The experiment I made use of was simple and easy, and in my case conclusive. Would it not be more candid on thy part to try the same test, than to scoff at what thou hast not tried? All I ask, is, that when any thing I say appears mystical or extravagant, thou wouldst try for thyself, whether a persevering use of "the Test of Truth" may not make it appear plain and reasonable.

The grand difference which I found between the remedy offered by the Bible, and that of every other religion in the world, was this. They all hold out to us insufficient motives for action, and direct us to an insufficient source of strength. The motive of our virtue, is to be self-esteem or the applause of others. Our strength is to be derived from our own resolutions or reasonings. The Bible, on the contrary, forbids us to think highly of ourselves, or to "receive honor one of another;" it commands us to "seek the honor which cometh of God only."|| The love of our reconciled God in Christ Jesus, sweetly rekindling our long extinguished affections to him, is to be the motive of all our actions. Now this motive will last as long as the love of God lasts; that is, to all eternity. Human motives are perishable. The praise we so eagerly covet, disappoints our expectation when it is obtained. And what self-esteem can quiet a wounded conscience? Besides, the Bible motive is worthy of a rational being. Human motives are such, that those who are

* 2 Cor. v. 19.
§ 1 John v. 11.

† Heb. i. 3. Col. ii. 9. ‡ Cor. i. 22, 24.
|| Rom. xii. 3, 10. Phil. ii. 3. John. v. 44.

most influenced by them, are ashamed to own them. Love, divine love, purifies, and ennobles, and satisfies the soul: it makes the source of action pure, and then the actions themselves must be so. Human motives debase the soul, and render it mean and selfish; they must in the end prove unsatisfactory: they pollute the source of actions, and make men like painted sepulchres, fair without, but hollow and rotten within. And as for strength, while the Bible assures us that all human efforts and resolutions are frail as the bruised reed, and transitory as the morning dew; it informs us that "the grace of Jesus is sufficient for us," and that we "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us."* I applied for this grace and this strength. I did not apply in vain.

One peculiarity in the Scripture remedy struck me as very remarkable. This was the pains taken to pour contempt upon all human pride and glory. As we fall by pride and independence, we must be restored by humility and dependence. The Scriptures leave us not one single thing in ourselves whereof to glory. The "wise man must not glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his might, nor the rich man in his riches."† All boasting is forever excluded. If we come to God, it must be as sinners through Christ. If we receive heaven, it must be as the purchase of Christ's merits, not of our own deservings. From first to last, the Christian is taught to say,—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but *unto thy name* give glory."‡

6. During this reading, I discovered the reason, which had so long prevented me from receiving the truth as it is in Jesus, and from finding in the Scriptures those treasures of wisdom and gladness which they contain. "They that be whole," says this divine philosophy, "need not a physician, but they that are sick."§ So long as I knew not that my soul was altogether infected with the dreadful malady of sin, it was not possible for me to appreciate His love, who came to save me from my sins. But when the Holy Spirit taught me that I was utterly undone and unclean, then the knowledge of Him who "is able to save to the uttermost," and whose "blood cleanseth from all sin," became the only cordial which could relieve my fainting spirits. From that moment I ceased to stumble at the doctrine of the cross. I was a sinner, I wanted a Saviour. In Jesus Christ I found all my wants satisfied. I fled for refuge to this hope, which had been thus unexpectedly set before me. Into his hands I have committed my spirit, and I know "that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him."|| Thus will you, when God shows you that you are vile and condemned and hateful in his sight, experience the sweetness of the name of Jesus.

7. The Scriptures afford me a clue to many things which have embarrassed the most penetrating understandings. One of these things was the reason, why it happens that this book appears full

* 1 Cor. xii. 9. Phil. iv. 13.

† Jer. ix. 23.

‡ Psalm cxv. 1.

§ Matt. ix. 12.

|| 2 Tim. i. 12.

of absurdities if not contradictions to an unconverted person ; while the believer views it as a glorious whole, all whose parts are in perfect unison, and which explain and illustrate each other. And this is the reason :—“the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” “For the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them.”* The doctrines of Scripture, which had before appeared to me an inexplicable mass of confusion and contradictions, were now written on my understanding with the clearness of a sunbeam. For, saith the same Scripture, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”†

Above all, that once abhorred doctrine of the divinity of Christ, was now become exceeding precious to me. From my inmost soul I recognized Jesus as my Lord and my God. Of this change in my views I also found an account in Scripture. “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”‡ Nominal Christians may indeed call him Lord, Lord, with their lips, and in the externals of a formal devotion ; but their hearts cannot go along with their professions, until the Spirit of God convince them.

I was sensible that a vast revolution had been effected in my temper, views, and dispositions. For this I should have been at a loss to account, had not the same Bible furnished me with a solution of the mystery. “If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature : *old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.*”§

The external evidences of Christianity, though I now perceived all their force, were no longer necessary to my conviction. I need no proofs to convince me that the sun is shining at midday. I needed none to convince me that the love of my reconciled God and Father was shining full upon my soul, with an enlightening, purifying, and vivifying influence. When objections assailed me, I found myself much in the situation of the man who opposed to all the cavils of the Jews this simple, yet irresistible answer ;—“Whether these things be as ye say, I know not :—*one thing I know,—whereas I was blind, now I see.*”||

Having formed my opinions solely by the word of God, my attention was naturally attracted by the various sects of Christianity, with which this land of toleration abounds. I belonged to the Established Church, and found every reason to continue within her walls. But in every sect, which took the pure, unadulterated Bible for its standard, I perceived a small number of persons who desired no other happiness than the love of God. These, I observed, to whatever denomination they belonged, loved and understood one

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

§ 2 Cor. v. 17.

† 1 Cor. iv. 6.

|| John x. 25.

‡ Ibid. xii. 3.

another, but were often hated and misconstrued by the rest of mankind. If they differed as to some points of minor importance, they were, however, unanimous upon the grand essentials of religion. In this one point, especially, I found them to be all perfectly agreed among themselves, and perfectly opposed to all other men:—they, with one consent, ascribed to Jesus the whole glory of their salvation, acknowledging no merit in themselves which could possibly interest God in their favor.

At the same time I could not help perceiving, that in every persuasion (my own not excepted) the *majority* were Christians only in name, and in reality believed in God no more than the professed freethinker believes in him. For this one thing is certain. If they did really believe in the Bible, they would be more intent upon escaping the threatenings and gaining the promises of the Bible, than they are upon the riches, honor, pleasures or learning of this world. But the contrary is the fact. They are more intent upon the riches, honor, pleasures, or learning of this world, than upon escaping the threatenings, or gaining the promises of the Bible. Therefore, they do not believe the threatenings or promises of the Bible. If they believed them, they would act upon them. By not acting upon them, they prove that they do not believe them. To believe really in God is to be convinced that he is something better than the world, and better than self. It implies, therefore, a hearty and entire renunciation of the world and self; and a hearty and entire devotion of ourselves to God, as to something incomparably better.

The *few* then, of every Christian denomination, I recognized as members of the true Church of Christ. At first the small number of real Christians perplexed me, and I anxiously exclaimed, Are there so few that be saved? But I remembered that even this circumstance added its testimony to the veracity of the Scripture statement, which always represents the Church of Christ as a little flock,* exposed to the hatred and derision of the larger portion of mankind, who should continue obstinate in their monstrous rebellion, against the Most High. Besides this, when I reflected on the mightiness of the change which must take place in every sinner's heart before he could sincerely love God, and the necessity of his submitting to be viewed with contempt and disgust by many who before had loved and courted him, I rather marvelled at the miracle of divine grace, by which any are saved, than inquired, why so few? But I found from the prophetic writings that the number of Christ's enemies shall not always exceed that of his friends. The time is not far distant, when “the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”†

I have endeavored briefly to recapitulate the chief reflections which occurred to me while I was reading the Bible, with the help (as I verily believe) of the Spirit of Jesus. From that time I have continued to sit at the feet of Jesus, and to hear his word: taking

* Luke xii. 32.

† Isaiah xi. 9.

him for my Teacher and Guide in things temporal as well as spiritual. He has found in me a disciple so slow of comprehension, so prone to forget his lessons, and to act in opposition to his commands, that were he not infinitely meek and lowly in heart, he would long ago have cast me off in anger. But he still continues to bear with me, and to give me line upon line and precept upon precept. And I am certain that he will never leave me nor forsake me; for though I am variable and inconstant, "with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

In narrating the means by which I was drawn forth out of the horrible abyss of infidelity, my design has been to give some idea of the process which must take place in every sinner's heart, before he can know or desire to know the God who gave him being. And thus it must be with you. You must be roused to a lively sense of the importance of knowing God;—must be convinced that you have hitherto lived in a state of blindness and enmity against him:—you must learn that all your fancied wisdom is mere folly in his sight; and must be ready to receive the truth as God is pleased to reveal it. Instead of insolently dictating the way in which God shall deal with his offending creature, you must lay down the arms of your rebellion, and accept of pardon and peace *upon his terms*. When these dispositions are wrought in your heart (and they can be wrought only by a Divine Power), then the Lord will reveal Himself to you, show you the truth of His Everlasting Gospel, and bring the salvation of Jesus home to your heart. I ask you not to believe any thing upon my word. That were indeed foolish, when you cannot take it upon God's word. But I beseech you to make *trial* of God's word. Reject it not till you have put it to the test I have proposed to you. Examine thus for yourselves. Know whether the God of Scripture be as he is there styled, "the God who heareth prayer." And we, who "have tasted that the Lord is gracious," will not cease to pray for you, that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His Mighty Power." Amen.—Eph. i. 17—19.

* James i. 17.

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JUSTIFYING AND ELECTING GRACE.

THE FREENESS AND SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD'S
JUSTIFYING AND ELECTING GRACE.

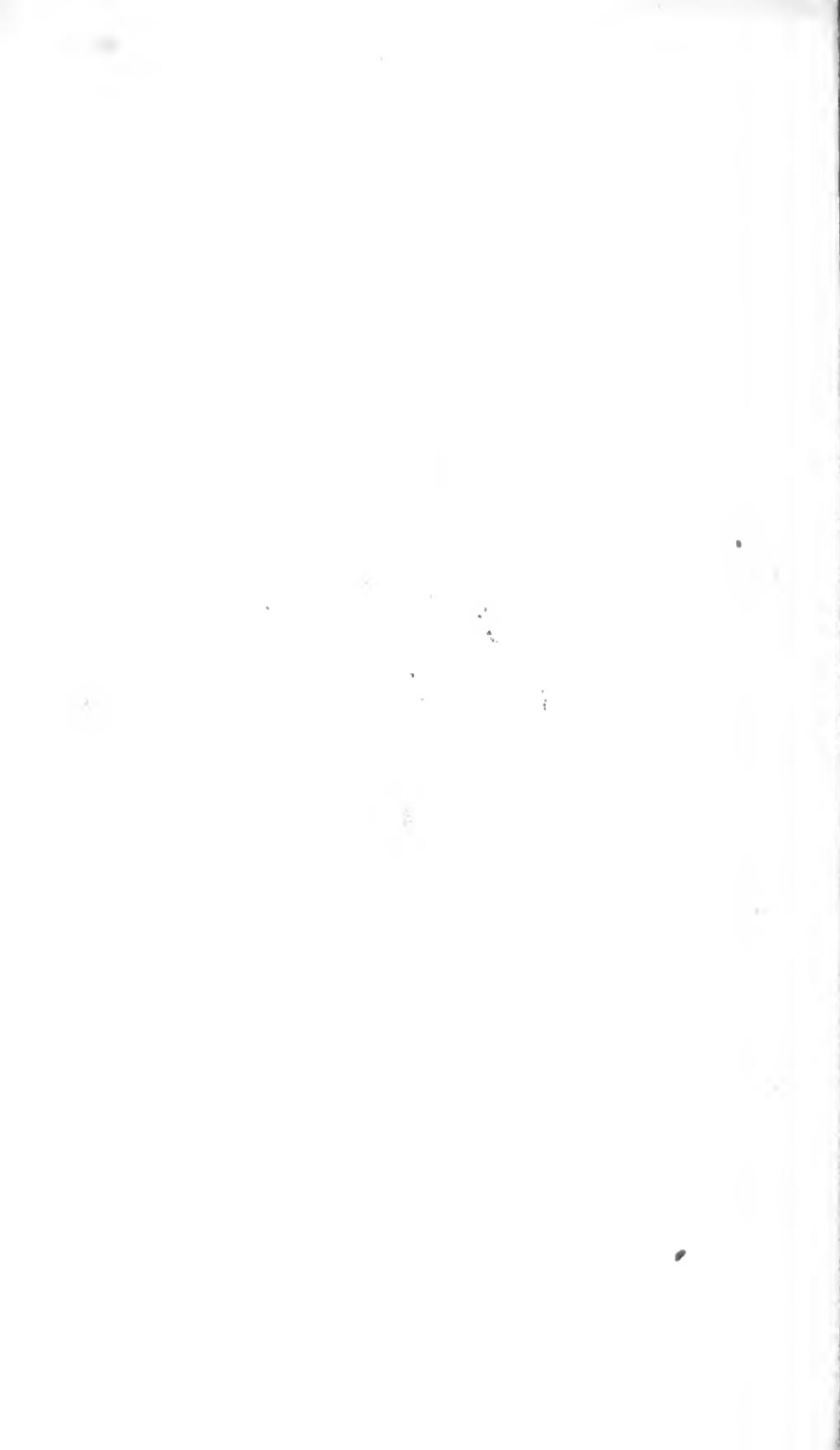
BY MARY JANE GRAHAM,
LATE OF STOKE FLEMING, DEVON.

P R E F A C E.

MANY plain persons, who have not time to read long treatises, or to enter into the intricacies of controversy, entertain doubts upon some of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and suffer those doubts to remain unsatisfied, either because they deem the subject unprofitable, or think they have not time for its investigation. No subject, however, can justly be deemed unprofitable, a right knowledge of which is essential either to our eternal salvation, or to the comfort and consistency of our Christian walk.

I believe the doctrine of free justifying grace to belong to the former class of subjects ; that of sovereign electing grace to the latter. Every person who has time to read his Bible, and to pray over it, may obtain a clear and experimental knowledge of these truths ; and to assist him in doing so, is the object of the following pages. And for the comfort of those who are members of the Church of England, the Author has, on every subject, brought the words of that church forward to prove how strictly they agree with the Scripture statement of that subject. Not that any single doctrine can be either proved or disproved from the Service and Articles of our Church, but that having examined the doctrine by Scripture, it is satisfactory to find our Church bearing her testimony to the truth of what the Scripture says.

May the Lord the Spirit, without whom not one good word can be written or read to any good purpose, bless both the writer and reader of this little treatise, with such a spiritual understanding of His word, as may enable them, with one mind and one mouth, to glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



THE FREENESS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ON ORIGINAL SIN.

AN obscure or imperfect view of one doctrine often leads to the rejection of another. Thus I have always found, that those who conscientiously reject the doctrine of election, do so from an inability to take into the account, the absolutely free and unconditional nature of God's grace in pardoning sinners; and I believe the clearness of our views of this latter doctrine to be, in most cases, commensurate with our deep and abiding conviction of man's utter and original depravity.

This may happen to real Christians. A person may see enough of the sin of his heart and life, to come heartily to Christ for salvation, and yet he may not be so deeply convinced of his entire ruin in the fall, and of the desperate wickedness and utter helplessness of his nature from the very womb, as to perceive the justice, or even the necessity of the doctrine of election.

Yet a very clear conviction of our natural enmity against God, and of our entire inability to seek or to choose any thing that is good, plainly involves with it a conviction that if we love God, it must be because he *first* loved us; that if we choose Christ and his ways at all, it can be ascribed to no other cause than that he *first* chose us,—or in other words, that we are elect, according to the foreknowledge of God.

Such being my view of the case, I entreat my reader's attention while I say a few words on the doctrine of original sin. It is the very first lesson in the school of Christ; and it is only by being well rooted and grounded in these first principles, that we can hope to go on to perfection. The doctrine is written in Scripture as with a sunbeam. If we do not feel some conviction of it in our own hearts, it affords a sad proof that we still belong to that "generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness."* "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits."† With *Him* a high look, and a proud heart, an idle word, and a light thought is sin. His law

* Prov. xxx. 12.

† Ibid. xvi. 2.

is spiritual, reaching to every thought and intent of the heart.—“Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”*

If then we say that we have *no sin*, we make God a liar; but if we allow that we *sin at all*, then must we allow that *our whole nature* is sinful and corrupt. At least our Saviour thought so. He declares that corrupt fruit only can come from a corrupt tree: corrupt doings of a corrupt nature. “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”† As if our blessed Saviour had said: “Be consistent; either say at once that ye know no sin, or if indeed conscience witnesses that ye do sin every day, and every hour of your lives, then confess that your corrupt doings proceed from a nature inherently corrupt. If your nature were a good, a holy nature, it could not be thus continually putting forth the evil fruit of unholy actions. The clusters that bow down the branches of the vine may become less luxuriant, but still they are grapes; no change of season or of climate can cause it to teem with the unsightly fruit of the bramble, or the tasteless berries of the thorn. Look then no longer for any thing good in yourselves; it is to look for grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles. Once I had planted you a noble vine, wholly a right seed; but now are ye turned to the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me. The parent stock became corrupt, and spread corruption through all its branches. One only hope remains for you. Confess your sin and misery, and seek to be grafted, contrary to nature, into me the true vine: thus abiding in me, and I in you, ye who in yourselves can do nothing, shall in me bear much and good fruit.” The fountain of humanity has been poisoned at its very head, and will bring forth nothing but pollution: “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;”‡ out of it flow, as from their natural source, evil thoughts, adulteries, murders, and all that train of corruptions mentioned by our Lord in Mark vii. 21, 22. “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.”§ These words of our Lord again seem to imply, ‘Be consistent; either admit that I am God, or if ye will have it that I am but a mere man like yourself, then ascribe no goodness to me; for know, that in man dwelleth no good thing.’ “Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”|| “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”¶ They that are in the flesh cannot please God.”** Why so? Because “the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”†† O how the very opinions of men on this subject prove the depth of their blindness and perverseness: that they will persist in saying, “I am rich and

* James ii. 10.

† Matt. vii. 18.

‡ Jer. xvii. 9.

§ Mark. x. 17.

|| Luke xiii. 2, 3.

¶ John iii. 6.

** Rom. viii. 8.

†† Ibid. viii. 7.

increased with goods, and have need of nothing :" when he who tried the heart and reins has affirmed of them, that they are "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked."*

The Scripture history of man opens with these words, "And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created he him."† "God is a Spirit;"‡ it must, therefore, have been in his spiritual image that man was created. In holiness, in happiness, in knowledge, such as become his state,—in these things man resembled his Maker.

Now, it is very remarkable, that after the fall, we are expressly told, that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness after his image,"§ that is, as unlike the original holy image of God as darkness is to light, or corruption to incorruption. For would we ascertain from the mouth of God himself, what man was then like, let us go a chapter or two further, and we shall find the Lord looking down upon his ruined creation, upon those things which his hand made, and which he had once pronounced to be very good.

Now "God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt : for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth :|| and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually."¶ Can the Spirit of truth testify of our character in plainer or in stronger terms.

But lest those who resist even the Spirit when his words would convince them of sin, should object that this description is only applied to the wicked generation that was swept away by the flood, God has provided against this subterfuge.

The windows of heaven are stopped ; the rain from heaven is restrained ; the waters return from off the earth ; and the ark rests upon the mountains of Ararat. Eight chosen persons, the remains of the once countless multitude, come forth from this hiding-place of the Lord's providing, and join together in a sacrifice of thanksgiving, which rises up as a sweet-smelling savor before God.** Let us pause a moment to see what we can collect from Scripture concerning the persons who knelt around the family altar. One of them is cited as a pattern of holiness throughout the Old and New Testaments. We learn but little of his three sons : yet an act of filial piety is recorded of two of them which, together with the blessing of their inspired father, mark them, in our esteem, for holy men. Nothing is told us concerning their wives : yet we may not unfairly suppose, that out of this little female remnant there would be some who, like their husbands and father, walked with God. So that we have here eight persons, of whom we know that *three* were good ; and we know only of *one* who was wicked. Now it was *upon this very occasion* in which the sweet savor of this very sacrifice was ascending before God, that he said, "I will not again

* Rev. iii. 17.

|| Ibid. vi. 12.

† Gen. i. 25, 27.

¶ Ibid. vi. 5.

‡ John iv. 24.

** Ibid. viii. 20, 21.

§ Gen. v. 3.

curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."* What, *still evil*? Still does the Holy Ghost bear his testimony against man? Yet not one of all that rebellious generation remains. Mankind is reduced to an exceeding small compass. Never has the earth been so purified. Never since has it contained so select an assembly as that which we are now considering. Yet still—still the character of man is thus given by *Him who cannot lie*. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth":—the heart of the righteous Noah, no less than that of the ungodly Ham: for had there been an exception in so small a circle, the Judge of the whole earth would not have included them all in the same sweeping accusation. Moreover, he declares that the heart of man *will be always evil*: for that is the very reason he gives why he will curse the ground no more for man's sake. He does not say, 'I will not do it again, because they will improve—their hearts will grow better,' but 'I will do so no more, because the heart of man is evil from his youth.' Not all the waters of the flood can wash out the guilty stain which Adam has entailed upon his children—not all the waters of the flood can cleanse the earth, so long as one of Adam's sin-defiled race shall remain upon its surface. And to this day, if we had no other witness to testify against us that our hearts are evil; yet have we an accusing monitor in the clouds, even the bow of the covenant which God has set there for a sign to us, that he will not in *our* days bring the waters to cover the earth; because the imaginations of the thoughts of *our* hearts are *evil—only evil—evil continually—evil from our youth*. The Hebrew word rendered *imaginations* is, as we learn from the marginal notes, much stronger than the interpretation conveys an idea, of, since it signifies the whole intents, purposes, and desires of the heart.

Would we know the *reason* of this indelible pollution, which fallen man has transmitted to his latest descendants? let that given by Scripture suffice—"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."[†] But is not the new-born babe innocent? Yes, from the commission of actual sin, but not from the pollution of a nature altogether sinful; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? "Death passed upon all men, for all have sinned."[‡] Why then is death so often commissioned to snatch away the babe in the first hour of its existence?—why, but because that babe is a sinful creature? Sin, that root of bitterness, has already shot its fibres into the inmost soul. That infant "born of the flesh, is flesh"[§] and "as such cannot please God"^{||}—cannot bring forth any other than the accursed fruits of the flesh. As surely as the cockatrice' egg will hatch into a viper, so surely will the babe born of unclean parents be itself unclean;—so surely it will be "by nature a child of wrath, even as others."[¶] And therefore it is as the Apostle tells us, that "Death reigneth over all, even over all them that have

* Gen viii. 21.

§ John iii.

† Job. xiv. 4.

|| Rom. viii. 8.

‡ Rom. v. 12.

¶ Ephes. ii. 3.

not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."* I entertain not a doubt that these little ones are redeemed by the blood of Jesus; but that they *need* redemption, that they are *sinners*,—children of wrath by nature,—of this truth I am equally well assured, and every little mound in the church-yard seems to have a voice that tells me so.

The baptism of infants is a striking recognition of their ruined and sinful state by nature; for what is baptism but a sign of the washing away of the filth of our polluted nature? The Church service on this, as well as most other points, is irresistibly plain and convincing. In the baptism of *infants*, the priest thus begins his exhortation: 'Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin; I beseech you to call on God the Father, that of his bounteous mercy, he may grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have.' Again, 'We call upon thee for this infant, that he coming into thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration. O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him.'

Let not any one so far misunderstand me as to suppose that I think baptism is any thing more than the *outward sign* of regeneration, or the washing away of the filth of the flesh: though I believe that if with our Church we carry little children *in faith* to Jesus, we have every reason to hope that he will receive them in his arms, and bless them with the inward grace. But my object here is solely to point out how our Church in the baptism of infants, acknowledges the doctrine of original sin.

The Holy Ghost has instructed the Apostle to give us such a full comment upon the spiritual death we all die in Adam, that we cannot too often read and pray over the following passages, Rom. v. 12, 21. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45, 49. Ephes. iv. 22, 24. Col. iii. 9, 10; there are many others in which our nature in Adam is spoken of, in contradistinction to the new and holy nature we receive in Christ Jesus. So essential is a right understanding of this truth, that until we receive it, many of the most beautiful parts of the Church service must appear just as unintelligible to us as if they were written in an unknown language. Nay, worse than unintelligible, they must seem extremely foolish and ridiculous. How absurd (to an understanding not convinced of the original defilement of our nature) must it appear to talk of remitting an infant's sins; of causing the old Adam to be buried, and his carnal affections to die in him; while all the time the hearer thinks that the infant as yet has *no sins*, *no carnal affections*,—while the very existence of the old Adam, or original sin, is doubted by him!

The Scripture is so full of testimonies to this important truth, that it seems to mingle with every other doctrine, and serves as a kind of master-key to unlock every other mystery. Take away

* Rom. v. 14.

this, and the Redeemer loses half his praise ; the types and sacrifices of the law lose half their significancy ; for they shadow forth the sin of our nature, as well as our actual transgressions, and Jesus came to deliver us from the guilt of our nature, as well as from the evil of our lives. Oh, what an unmeaning heap of words has been handed down to us by the law of Moses, the Psalms of David, the confessions of Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Daniel, Jeremiah, and the rest of God's saints, if that evil nature which caused them to groan did not really exist ! Above all, what shall we make of Romans iii. and vii. ? What shall we understand by the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between the old man and the new man, between the carnal and spiritual affections ? Was St. Paul dreaming when he said, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwell-eth no good thing ?" * Was he beside himself when he declared, "that he found in himself a law, that when he would do good evil was present with him ?" † That though by divine grace he had learnt "to delight in the law of God after the inward man, yet still he saw another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which was in his members ?" ‡ The Apostle of the Gentiles "who labored more abundantly than they all ;" § he, who "had been caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for him to utter" || amongst sinful men ; he, who "counted all things but dung that he might win Christ ;" ¶ he, who was ready not only to be bound, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus ; ** this chosen vessel of mercy, full of zeal and full of love, and under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so groaned under the burden of the original corruption of his nature ; the law of sin warring in his members ; that he was compelled to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" †† And from the time of Paul there has never been a real Christian who has not often felt himself constrained to adopt his language, and to say in the language of his soul, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" The remedy, as is usual in Scripture, follows close upon the complaint : "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." ‡‡

In this epistle, the Holy Ghost is seen peculiarly to fulfil his sacred office. He shall convince of sin, of righteousness and of justification. How strong is the language in which he presses the first condemning testimony home to our shrinking conscious bosoms ! How sweet and clear the second part of his testimony, when he takes of the righteousness of Jesus and shows it to us, yea, tells us that it is ours, if we will cease to go about to establish our own ! And when he is fulfilling the third part of his mission, with what triumphant energy has he inspired the Apostle to unfold to us, how we are justified freely by his grace, acquitted, so that none can lay

* Rom. vii. 18.

† Ibid. vii. 21.

‡ Ibid. vii. 22, 23.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

|| Ibid. xii. 2, 4.

¶ Phil. iii. 8.

** Acts xxi. 13.

†† Rom. vii. 13.

‡‡ Ibid. vii. 25.

aught to our charge, not Satan himself, that accuser of the brethren ; for the prince of this world is judged, Satan bruised under our feet !

But to return to my subject—" We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin, as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one : there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips ; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness ; their feet are swift to shed blood ; destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. iii. 9—17. Which compare with Psalm liii. Now, since God the Spirit knew the hearts of his creatures, and has given this as a faithful portrait of the real character of every individual upon the face of the earth ; it follows that *all* have that original sin, which is the fruitful source of all evil actions and dispositions.

Having now brought our testimony from the "three that bear witness in heaven,"—having heard from God the Father, that the imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth ;—from God the Son, that out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, blasphemy, pride, foolishness ; that the corrupt heart, like a corrupt tree, can only bring forth corrupt fruit ;—and from God the Spirit, that the carnal mind is enmity against God ; that in us dwelleth no good thing :—let us now turn again to the words of our church, and see whether she has received from Scripture, this humbling doctrine of man's utter depravity. Of original or birth sin—Article 9.—' Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam' (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) "*but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man* that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is *of his own nature inclined to evil* ; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit ; and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated.' Of works before justification—Article 13.—' Works done *before* the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, *are not pleasant to God*, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ. For that they are not done as God both willed and commanded them to be done, *we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.*' In the second Article, we are assured that Christ was a sacrifice, 'not only for *original guilt*, but also for the actual sins of men.'

Now as to all those vain and curious questions which men, who would be wise above that which is written, have raised on the nature and causes of original sin, and how it is conveyed from Adam to his fallen race—with all these I would have nothing to do. All I want to insist upon, is the doctrine *as it stands in every part of*

the Bible; as it is set forth in the articles of our Church; as it is exemplified in the heart of every individual upon the face of the earth. In our own heart we cannot but find it, if we will let conscience do its office. Let then, “every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.”* Let us pray that the Spirit of truth would convince of what is written in the Word of Truth—that he would make ‘the burden of original sin grievous and intolerable’ to us: for till we thus perceive the truth, so as really to groan under the weight of our corrupt nature, we shall not discover the necessity of that new and holy nature, without which we cannot enter the kingdom of God. “They that be whole need not a physician.”† They that be righteous desire not a Saviour. They that acknowledge sin in part, but not that they are *wholly* depraved—estranged *from the womb*,—these, not conscious that the whole garment is spotted by the flesh, will seek to patch new cloth on the old garment, and so will make the rent worse: they will seek to put the new wine into old bottles—and what wonder if the old bottles burst, and the wine run out, and the bottles perish? No—the whole man must be renewed; and such as feel not their need of this thorough renovation, have not yet made the first step towards the possession of eternal life. For how can we be *alive to God* without knowing that we were once “dead in sins”?‡ How be restored to the Shepherd of our souls, without knowing that by nature we were as sheep going astray?§ How become children of grace, and yet not know that we “were by nature children of wrath even as others”?|| What should we think of the man, who was born blind; if, when he was restored to sight, he had professed to be ignorant that he was born blind? This cannot be—therefore as in nature, so in grace. Those who have been really converted from a state of nature, all join in their confessions of that state. I was blind; but now I see. I was dead; but now I am alive. I was lost; but now am found. Nor do they think they can too often revive their sense of God’s goodness and their own misery, by thus looking back to “the rock from whence they were hewn—to the hole of the pit from which they were digged.”¶ I conclude this subject in the words of one of the brightest luminaries of our Church—he has been called the judicious Hooker: had he lived in the present age a far different title would have been allotted to him; for he is, of all authors I ever read, the most full and decisive upon what are called *Calvinistic doctrines*. ‘It may seem something extreme which I will speak: therefore let every one judge it as his own heart shall tell him, and no otherwise. I will but only make a demand,—if God should yield unto us, not as he did unto Abraham, if fifty, forty, thirty: yea, or if ten good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes this city should not be destroyed: but, and if he should make us an offer thus large—search all the generations of men since the fall of our father Adam:

* Rom. iii. 19.
§ Isaiah liii. 6.

† Matthew ix. 12.
|| Ephes ii. 3.

‡ Ephes. ii. 1. 5.
¶ Isaiah li. 1.

find one man that hath done one action which hath passed from him pure without any stain or blemish at all; and for that one man's only action, neither man nor angels shall feel the torments prepared for both. Do you think that this ransom to deliver men and angels could be found to be among the sons of men?

CHAPTER II.

ON FREE GRACE.

THE principal arguments drawn from Scripture against the absolute freeness of Divine grace in pardon, justification, and sanctification of sinners, are such as these: that the threats and promises of the Gospel are usually expressed in a *conditional* form; and that grace is promised to all who *diligently seek* for it: this seeking then becomes a sort of meritorious act, by which we attract the notice or favor of God, and induce him to give us his grace. We will endeavor to examine each of these arguments separately.

And first, it must be allowed that there is a sense in which both the threats and promises of the Gospel are conditional. As to the former of these, "the soul that sinneth it shall die":* "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them":† "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all":‡ These are some of the threats of that "God who is a consuming fire":§ And surely we have abundantly fulfilled the conditions to which they are attached. Death—even the death of the soul is our well-earned wages. The curse is our natural inheritance. We are born to it: for we are conceived in sin—we are shapen in iniquity—we go astray as soon as we are born, speaking lies: and every day, and every hour, and every moment, do we confirm our right and title to this inheritance; deserving, both by nature and practice, the fulfilment of every one of the heavy threats of that God who cannot lie. Now I would ask what efforts of our own can rescue us from the fulfilment of these threatenings, since we are debtors to do the *whole* law? and if we offend in *one* point, we are guilty of *all*; and cursed are we if we continue not in *all* things written in the book of the law to do them. We can but deserve them over and over. O talk not of conditions—*these are the conditions!*

* Ezekiel xviii. 20.

† Deut. iv. 24.

‡ Gal. iii. 10.

§ James ii. 10.

We have done our part—have irretrievably ruined ourselves. We owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay!

But *Christ* has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being *made a curse for us*. “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things.”* He, and He only has borne the threats of God in his people’s stead; and he has borne them so completely away, that they shall never be mentioned to believers any more. Their sins have been transferred to Jesus. “He himself bare them in his own body on the tree.”† Infinite justice has been appeased by an infinitely complete satisfaction,‡ and now (oh let us lift up our hearts in gratitude unspeakable,) “God can be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”§ Thus if we believe in Jesus, we escape the threatened curse of God, not because *we* have fulfilled one single condition, by which we *might* have escaped it, but simply and solely because *Jesus has borne the curse for us*. He has borne it *all*, and he has borne it *alone*. *His* almighty shoulders have sustained the entire weight of the curse, one tittle of which had been sufficient to *grind the whole human race to powder*. He has “blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”|| And now, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again,”¶ thus proving that *all is paid*; for having once as our Surety taken upon himself our mighty debt, we may rest satisfied that justice did not let him go until he had paid *the uttermost farthing*.

Consider the cross of Christ; *who* it was that suffered. “The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”** *How* he suffered, “behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.”†† Remember that Christ crucified is “the wisdom of God and the power of God;”‡‡ and then say, would this might plan have been devised to avert the curse from man, if he had been able by any efforts of his own to escape it? But there are those who willingly allow that Christ has done *a great deal* towards saving them from the wrath to come; but *not* that he has done *all*. It must be a kind of joint concern, in which he has engaged to pay a part, if we pay the rest. His salvation is regarded as a sort of reserve to make up deficiencies. True, He died for us, but then we must *merit* by repentance, that his death be applied to us; we must do what *we* can to appease God’s justice, and he will throw his blood into the scale, to make up the rest.

I do sincerely believe that of all the delusions which Satan has succeeded in putting into the hearts of men; of all his subtle con-

* Acts xiii. 38, 39.

† John i. 7; ii. 1, 2. Heb. ix. 14; x. 12—18.

|| Col. ii. 14.

‡‡ Lam. i. 12.

† 1 Peter ii. 24.

§ Rom. iii. 26.

** Isa. ix. 6.

¶¶ 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

trivances to rob Christ of his glory, this is the master-piece. For of Satan's other devices we are less ignorant, but this one often comes to us dressed up in such a specious shape, as to "deceive, if possible, the very elect."* Many to whom the absurdity of purchasing heaven by their own good works is sufficiently evident; who see that pardon is bought with the precious blood of Christ; are yet capable of the still greater absurdity of thinking to *buy* that precious blood which is *above all price*, with the poor imperfect offer of a few sighs and tears which they call repentance. And what is this repentance? Alas! they have never repented at all, if they be not ready from the heart to acknowledge with the excellent Bishop Beveridge—"I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are an aggravation of them; my repentance needs to be repented of; my tears want washing; and the very washings of my tears need to be washed over again, in the blood of my Redeemer."[†]

Then let us freely acknowledge that the heavy burden of God's wrath has been lifted away *only* by the atonement of Christ, and not by any superadded condition of our own performing. Christ has trodden the wine-press of God's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him. And as to repentance, that is just as much the purchase of his blood, as heaven itself is.[‡] "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but *in me* is thine help,"[†] is the language of Scripture to all who are looking round for some means of escape from the angry threatenings of God's word: some refuge to which they may flee from the wrath to come.

As to the promises, I do not say that they are unconditional either, but I do say that the conditions on which they depend are such as guilty man is altogether incapable of performing. I do say that Jesus as our *Surety*, has performed all these *for us*, and *by his Spirit* will perform them all, *in us*. Through his perfect atonement we escape the threatenings; through his unspotted obedience we become heirs of the promises,—heirs of eternal life. For if the blame of our sins has been imputed to *Him*, then has the merit of His righteousness been imputed to *us*. "If he has been made sin for us, then have we been made the righteousness of God in him."[§] And because the promises are ours for his sake, therefore the conditions of them are worked in us by his free Spirit; "for it is not we who live the life of faith, but Christ that liveth in us."^{||} I am very earnest on this point, because I believe that every thing we arrogate to ourselves in the work of redemption, is just so much taken from the finished work of Jesus. It is indeed very natural to our carnal minds to wish to have something of our own to look at, to rest upon, to glory in; but in proportion as we become spiritually minded, we shall discover that we have nothing of our own but sin and misery and helplessness; we shall learn to say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." "By

* Matt. xxiv. 24.

[†] Acts v. 31.

[‡] Hosea xiii. 9.

§ 2 Cor. v. 21. Rom. iv. 6; xi. 21; v. 19. Gal. iii. 29. || Gal. ii. 20. John xv. 4, 5.

grace are ye saved through faith ; and even that faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.”* “The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”† Oh then may we, receiving “abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one, even Jesus Christ.‡

One of the sweetest promises, upon which the mind of every Christian rests with unspeakable delight, runs thus : “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”§ Here is a *condition*, Him that cometh ; and a *promise*, I will not cast out. But who are those that come to Jesus ? “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.”|| “No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”¶ “No man can come to me, except it were given him of my Father.”** How distinctly are we here told, that the same free mercy which promises to receive us *when we come*, must be put forth to *make us come*, or *we never should come*. The promise will surely be fulfilled to all who obey the condition ; but none *can* obey the condition, save those *to whom it is given*. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.”†† Precious promise ! indispensable condition ! For how can such as delight not in holiness, abide in the love of the most holy Jesus ? Yet I will freely confess, that if the performance of even this most just and reasonable condition depended in any measure on *myself*, I should think the Lord Jesus had most cruelly mocked me, in setting before me a promise which in my case at least, must forever remain unfulfilled. But blessings on his sacred name, he has not made the promise without providing for the condition ; having also promised to put his laws in my mind, and write them on my heart.‡‡ So that I look on these very *conditions* as so many *promises*. As though my Saviour had said, ‘Ye shall abide in my love, *for that is unchangeable* ; but ye can by no means abide in my love, except ye keep my commandments. Now ye are not able to do this, therefore, behold I, even I will write them in your hearts, and copy them out in your lives. Freely then approach my throne of grace, and ask me for this promise ; and as ye cannot so much as ask *without me*, behold I have promised to pour out upon you the Spirit of grace and supplications, who shall abide with you forever, teaching you both what to pray for, and how to pray.”§§ In short I believe the heart of every redeemed sinner will enter deeply into the feeling which burns within mine while I say, Thank God, that the promises are not yea and amen *in me*, a miserable, weak, and sinful worm, incapable of performing one single condition of them ; but they are all yea and amen to me *in Christ Jesus*. *For his sake*, God will make them all good to me ; yes, for his sake *they are mine already*. They are my own inheritance, once forfeited

* Eph. ii. 8, 9.

† Rom. vi. 23.

‡ Rom. v. 17.

§ John vi. 37.

|| Ibid. vi. 37.

¶ Ibid. vi. 44.

** John vi. 65.

†† Ibid. xv. 10.

Heb. viii. 10.

§§ Zech. xii. 10. Rom. viii. 26.

by sin, but now redeemed with the precious blood of Christ ; my purchased possession, which can never cease to be mine till the price that was paid down for it ceases to be precious in the Father's sight. They are the sure and steadfast anchor of my soul ; the joy and rejoicing of my heart ; the song which enlivens this house of my pilgrimage ; better to me than life, dearer than my necessary food ; sweeter than honey and the honeycomb ; more precious than fine gold ; purer than silver purified seven times. When my soul pants after any of these most sweet and tender unsealings of God's love, I will not, I cannot go to him and say, Lord, give me those promises because I have performed the conditions of them, and am therefore *worthy* that thou shouldest give them to me. God forbid that I should take such a plea within my lips, for in so doing my own heart would condemn me, and God, who is greater than my heart, would condemn me. No, when I draw near to my reconciled God and Father, I will fill my mouth with far other arguments than these. I will say to him, Lord, thou knowest that *I* have *not* performed the conditions of these promises, but JEHOVAH *my righteousness has fulfilled them all for me*. I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies ; but worthy is the Lamb that was slain ; and for his dear sake thou wilt give me the best and greatest of them all ; and that exceeding abundantly, above all that I can ask or think.

Every condition necessary to salvation is fulfilled in us, not by any efforts of our own, but by our receiving continually grace for grace, out of the fulness of Jesus. Repentance is necessary, but we cannot repent of ourselves ; and therefore Jesus is exalted to give repentance.* It believes us, not only to repent of, but to *forsake* sin ; but sooner shall the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots, than we shall do good, who are accustomed to do evil ; and therefore *Jesus* is sent to bless us, "in turning away every one of us from our iniquities."† *Faith* is a necessary condition of salvation : "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."‡ "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life ; he that believeth not shall not see life."§ Yet this same faith is the "gift of God."|| It is "given to us on the behalf of Christ, to believe."¶ "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."** *Love* is no less necessary than faith. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema maran-atha."†† But the "carnal or natural mind is enmity against God."‡‡ And how then can it act so directly against its own nature as to *love* Him ? It is not only *indifferent*, not merely *slightly* opposed, but *in its very nature absolute enmity against God*. "Nor can it be subject to the law of God ;" §§ for the fulfilling of that law is love. Miserably hopeless then is our case, if that heart, which is thus defined "enmity against God,"

* Acts v. 31.

† Ibid. iii. 26.

‡ Ibid. xvi. 31.

§ John vi. 47; iii. 36.

|| Ephes. ii. 8.

¶ Phil. i. 29.

* * 1 Cor. xii. 3. Matt. xvi. 17. †† Ibid. xvi. 22.

§§ Rom. viii. 7.

||| Rom. viii. 7.

must so overcome the moral incapacity of its own nature, as to fill itself with love to Him. But Jesus has reconciled us who were alienated and enemies in our own minds by wicked works; and for his sake, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us."* Good works are absolutely necessary to salvation; "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit."† "Faith without works is dead: I will show thee my faith by my works."‡ But it has already been urged, that as the corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so neither can we who are evil do good things. "Therefore the children of God are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."§ True it is, that we are commanded to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;" but the reason follows—"for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure."|| I have used the word condition in this place, for the more convenient exposition of my meaning; but I consider the use of it, as applied to *us*, to be altogether incorrect. Faith, love, holiness, &c. were indeed to *Christ*, conditions of our salvation; but to us they are the consequences of salvation; or rather they are a part of our salvation, purchased for us by the obedience and atonement of Jesus Christ, "who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."<¶

We find then in ourselves an utter poverty of every thing that is spiritually good; "but God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus."<** We are nothing, can do nothing, say nothing, think nothing but what is evil. "Christ is all and in all." "Every good and every perfect gift cometh from above," and is given to us by the Father, for his beloved Son's sake. "We are complete in him."<††

I may seem to have often repeated the words 'gifts' and 'given'; but they cannot come over too often, nor be too earnestly dwelt on. The Scriptures are perpetually renewing the delightful repetition, and presenting the idea of somewhat gratuitously bestowed, under every possible variety of language and imagery. Sometimes they speak of buying the gospel blessings, and tell us to "come and buy without money and without price."<‡‡ And what is this, but to come and hold out the empty hand of faith, and receive as a free gift all that God will put into it. Sometimes they represent sin under the idea of a vast debt, expressly declaring that "Jesus frankly forgives all when we have nothing to pay."<§§ So long then as we think we have any thing to pay, we do not come under the description of those to whom Jesus frankly forgives all. But when convinced of our depravity and helplessness, we come poor, naked and empty to

* Col. i. 21. Rom. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 14. † John xv. 8.

‡ James ii. 19, 20.

§ Ephes. ii. 10.

|| Phil. ii. 12, 13. Isa. xxvi. 12. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

¶ Titus ii. 14.

** Ephes. i. 3.

†† Col. iii. 11. James i. 17. Col. ii. 10

¶¶ Isaiah lv. 1.

¶¶ Matt. xviii. 27.

Jesus, casting from us all confidence, save only that which his tender love and mercy excites, making mention of *his righteousness*, and *his only*; then, and not till then, will he freely pardon, freely clothe and enrich us, freely receive us among the children, and make us perfect through his own comeliness, which he puts upon the souls that simply trust in Him. The poor and needy, the weak and helpless, are his peculiar care, while those who think they have any strength or riches of their own to trust to, are not objects of his bounty, for “he feedeth the strong with judgment,”* and “sendeth the rich empty away.”†

If any of the promises are conditional, those which are expressed in the form of a covenant must be of that description, since the very word implies a compact or agreement. Let us then inquire into the terms of that covenant which God has condescended to make with his people.

We know the *first* covenant between God and man, *how that was kept*; and if man, as he came out of the hands of his Creator, upright, innocent and holy, could not keep conditions which he knew to be holy, just and good, how shall fallen man, “in whom dwelleth no good thing,” keep any conditions fit for a Holy God to propose? I have heard it said, ‘By sincere, though imperfect obedience:’ both which terms, applied in this sense, appear to me absolute nonsense. For, in the first place, is it not blaspheming the holiness and justice of God, to suppose that He “who cannot behold iniquity,” will be satisfied with an *imperfect* obedience? Then he will let go a little of his holiness—and a little of his justice, and part altogether with his attribute of truth? For *He has said*, That whosoever performs not the *whole* law, is guilty of *all*; and that “He will, by no means, clear the guilty.”‡ In the next place, how can *we* whose hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,§ talk of *sincere* obedience? We must have the deceitful heart taken away, and new hearts created within us, before we can render a sincere obedience: and then it will be no longer our own obedience. To express myself more clearly—‘works done *before* justification have the nature of sin, and cannot so much as make us meet to receive grace:’(Art. 9,) these therefore must be wholly out of the question, in any covenant, by which we think to merit God’s favor. ‘Works done *after* justification,’ though miserably imperfect, ‘yet have something of the nature of sincere obedience:’ but to call these the cause, either *directly* or *indirectly* of our justification, when they cannot by any means be produced till *after* justification; this would be, in the most preposterous manner to confound the *cause* with the *effect*, and to put the last *first*. Justification is the *producing cause*: works done *after* justification are the *natural effect*. Let me correct myself. The free love of God in Christ is *the sole cause* both of justification and sanctification; but He has so ordered it that the one shall *always*

* Ezek. xxxiv. 15.

† Isaiah ii. 10. Exodus xxxiv. 7.

‡ Luke i. 53.

§ Jer. xvii. 9.

follow the other in a fixed and inseparable connection ; and to say that good works *precede* or *occasion* justification, is to say that the fruit on the tree was there before ever the tree was planted : nay—that had not the fruit first blossomed and ripened, the tree had never come there at all—it is, in fact, to say that the fruit planted the tree.

Let us cease then from attempting, in whole or in part, to stand before God upon that covenant of works which our father Adam, with all the advantages of a sinless nature, did not keep. Far other are the means of acceptance which the Scriptures point out to us. They tell us that Jesus, “the second Adam—the mediator of the new covenant,” has taken upon himself, as our Surety, to perform all the conditions annexed to it. He has borne all the penalties due to our disobedience ; and has wrought out for us an obedience, so perfect, that the eye of God himself can perceive no flaw in it ; so infinitely meritorious, that those poor sinners who have it on, appear in the sight of the Father “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ;” they are all fair—there is no spot in them.* Place now our *sincerest* obedience by the side of the righteousness of Jesus. Compare our faint desires which expire in the utterance ; our tardy wishes which linger in the performance ; our few specious actions whose fair outside is a cloak to much that is selfish in the motives of them, and much that is perverse in the will. Compare this righteousness with the righteousness of Jesus ; of Him who “made it his meat and drink to do his Father’s will ;” whose zeal for the house of God “consumed Him ;” who did always such things as pleased God ; who “knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth ;” who “was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” and himself made higher than the heavens.† Oh ! who would appear before God in his own filthy and ragged garments, when he might be arrayed in the glorious apparel of Christ’s righteousness ? Why—why cling any longer to the idea of our own works, as the means of winning God’s favor ? Do we not see that this covering is narrower than “that a man may wrap himself in it ?” that it is not the covering of God’s Spirit ? and above all I would ask—why mix what God hath forever put asunder ? Is not the righteousness of Jesus sufficiently meritorious, that it must be helped out with our righteousness ? If it be a *perfect righteousness*, what need of trying to *improve* it by tacking to it some paltry mixture of our own fancied deserving ? This is the folly of man—of that vain worm who would be wiser than his Maker.

I cannot forbear mentioning in this place the notable methods which some who call themselves serious Christians, have hit upon to eke out that perfect righteousness which they think to be insufficient ; but which God has judged to be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. There are some who look upon the merits of Christ as given merely to *supply what is lacking* in their own *sincere* obedience ; these would cut such pieces out of the beautiful garment as would serve to patch up their own filthy rags ; forgetting

* Ephes. v. 27. Cant. iv. 7.

† John ix. 34. Psalm lxxix. 9. Heb. vii. 26.

that even the soldiers, who crucified Christ, refused to part his garment when they observed that it was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Others again profess to trust in Christ's righteousness; but talk, I know not what, of *deserving* by their own obedience, that this righteousness may be applied to them. These would put on the "spotless robe;" but Christ must accept their own righteousness as a kind of equivalent or compensation for it. A third sort feel that they cannot do without Christ's righteousness; but then it is *not enough*—they must also do *their* part; and when they have done this, they think that God will accept them: not for the sake of theirs alone—for that would be presumption, nor for the sake of Christ's alone—for that would be licentiousness; but in some way or other for the sake of the two together. These truly would adorn the "glorious dress" with their own faded tinsel picked from the dunghill. They would make it more acceptable in God's sight by sewing on to it their own filthy rags. It is not so with those who have learned the truth "as it is in Jesus." They desire with St. Paul "to be found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith."^{*} They know that Jesus has "made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness:"[†] by which all the promises of the new covenant are made as sure to believers as the justice and faithfulness—the oath and counsel of God can make them. Wonder not that the ministers of Christ should be exceedingly jealous on this point; for this is the wedding garment, without which whoso dares to appear before God, shall be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness.

But to return to the promises of the covenant: for, at the risk of apparent repetition, I am desirous of setting this most important subject in a clear point of view;—so far from holiness being made the *condition* of our obtaining them, it is itself the *great promise* insured to us by that covenant: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."[‡] "This is the covenant that I will make with them—I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."[§]

The character, by which the spirit of truth designates fallen men, is that of "covenant-breakers."^{||} "They," like men, "have transgressed the covenant."[¶] Isaiah says, "The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant."^{**} What then is the everlasting covenant? And how are we "covenant-breakers" to derive any benefit from it? Are the *terms* of the *everlasting* covenant changed since God entered into covenant with

* Phil. iii. 9.

† Daniel ix. 21.

‡ Jer. xxxii. 40.

§ Jer. xxxi. 33. See also Heb. viii. 10; x. 16.

|| Rom. 1. 31.

¶ Hosea vi. 7.

** Isaiah xxiv. 31.

Adam, as the representative of the whole human race? Has the Holy God ceased to stand upon a perfect obedience? Will he accept less at our hands than he would at those of our father Adam? Has he reversed the decree—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die?" No—the terms of the *everlasting* covenant remain unchanged. God still requires a sinless obedience: a righteousness without a flaw. Moreover, his justice demands satisfaction for his broken covenant. We can fulfil neither the one nor the other of these requirements. But behold the second Adam—who is the Lord from heaven! With him God hath established his covenant, as the representative of a remnant chosen according to the election of grace. Jesus is the mediator and the surety of a better covenant than that which was made with Adam, or the typical covenant made with Moses. And yet the terms of the covenants are the same—perfect obedience: death in case of disobedience. But the death has been borne by him "who died that we might live." The obedience has been fulfilled by him "through whose obedience many were made righteous." Jesus, as the surety of the everlasting covenant, has both paid the full penalty incurred by his people for the breach of the old covenant; and has likewise performed for them every condition of the new. "He was made sin for us." We are "made the righteousness of God in him." Thus, in the second Adam, we have paid to the uttermost farthing both the debt of satisfaction, and the debt of obedience. In our surety Jesus, we have "received at the Lord's hand double for all our sins." In our surety Jesus we have worked out our title to eternal life: we become rightful heirs of the promises. Thus God has made with his people "an everlasting covenant, well-ordered in all things, and sure;" and this covenant is "all their salvation, and all their desire." Moreover, this covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ before the world was, cannot be disannulled by the covenant of works made with Adam *since* the creation of the world, nor by the law, which was added nearly 3000 years afterwards. It is delightful to trace this covenant from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures of Truth, as it was faintly revealed to Adam and Noah; more clearly set forth to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; typified in every part of the ceremonial law, and foretold by the law-giver Moses; as it was sung by David, prophesied by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the rest of the prophets; manifested and fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus; and explained and enforced by the Apostle Paul and others of the holy Apostles. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"—for his free and complete salvation! for, if it were not *freely* given, we could *never* attain to it; and, if it were not *complete without our help*, we should be but *half* saved. Surely this of all others is that "gift which is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it, which way soever it turneth, it prospereth."*

The great question then about the promises seems to be, not so

* Proverbs xvii. 10.

much whether they are *conditional*, as whether God looks to *Christ*, or to *us*, for the *performance* of those conditions. If to *Christ*, the burden is laid upon “one that is *mighty*:” if to *us*, then we are undone; ‘for the condition of man after the fall is such, that he *cannot turn and prepare himself*, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by *Christ preventing us*, that we may have a *good will, working in us when we have that good will*? (Art. 10.) So then ‘we are accounted righteous before God, only *for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings*: wherefore, that we are justified by *faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as is more largely expressed in the Homily on Justification.’ (Art. 11.)

We now come to the second argument. Grace will be given to all who diligently seek for it. But if we attend to the Scripture account of every man, woman, and child by nature, we shall find that this seeking also is the *effect following upon grace received: not the cause producing it*. By this I mean to say, that the very act of *seeking grace* proves that *we have received grace already*; and that the very ability to seek, is itself the *free gift* of God’s sovereign grace. If every thought of man’s heart is *evil*, and that *continually*, surely it is not out of that heart that the first desire of any good thing can spring. If, by nature, there is *none that seeketh after God*, whence can the first attempt to seek him arise but from free grace drawing us *contrary to nature*? Freely must grace be given to enable us to seek at first; and freely must it be continued, to enable us to go on seeking. I know that *none shall seek the Lord in vain*; *none who come* shall be cast out; *none who believe* shall come short of everlasting life; *none who choose the better part* shall have it taken away from them; but then *none can seek the Lord, unless he first seek them*.* None can come except it be given them of the Father;—none can believe save as many as are ordained to eternal life; none can choose Christ except he first choose them.† If again we consider the magnitude of the change which must take place in every sinner’s heart before he can truly and earnestly seek God, we shall be convinced that no part of it is properly his own. He must “be born again;”‡ he must “become a new creature; old things must pass away, all things must become new;”§ he must “pass from death unto life;”|| “from darkness to light—from the power of Satan unto God;”¶ “from going about to establish his own righteousness, to submit himself to the righteousness of God;”** and this to a proud carnal heart, is the most difficult of all. And who is sufficient for these

* John x. 16. Ezekiel xxxiv. 4. Luke xix. 10. Psalm cxix. 176. Ephes. ii. 13.

† John vi. 65; xv. 16. Acts xiii. 48.

‡ Ibid. iii. 3.

§ 2 Cor. v. 17.

|| 1 John iii. 14.

¶ Acts xxvi. 11. 1 Peter ii. 9.

** Rom. x. 9.

things? Who but He that first formed us in the womb, can cause us to be born again of the Spirit? Who but he that originally created us, is able to create us anew in Christ Jesus? Who but the Giver of natural life can give spiritual life; "and quicken those that were dead in trespasses and sins?"*

When the Lord of life stood by the grave of Lazarus, and said, Lazarus come forth, and he that was dead instantly came forth; who would say that this act of lifting himself up was the cause of his coming to life, and not rather that his coming to life was the cause of his being able to lift himself up? It is thus when Jesus by his word and Spirit says to the heart of a sinner, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."† Instantly that dead soul arises, and its first act is seeking, or prayer: but this same act of seeking is the *effect* of spiritual life, not the *cause*. We pray *because we are alive, not that we may live*. We cannot quicken ourselves when dead in sin, any more than we can bring a dead body to life. But when Jesus has quickened us, we shall as surely perform all those actions, which demonstrate the soul to be spiritually alive, as a dead body when raised by divine power, will surely perform all the functions of a living person. Grace, great grace must be infused, to enable us to seek at all, and he who first gave grace to seek, will give *more* grace in answer to that seeking, thus fulfilling that precious Scripture, which saith, "To him that hath, shall be given."‡ We neither *begin* nor *carry on* the work of grace in our own hearts. Jesus is the *author and finisher*, the *Alpha and Omega* of our faith. From the first spark of grace that faintly glimmers upon us here, to the full blaze of glory which shall burst upon us in heaven; *all, all is his doing*; it is *he* that made us alive (spiritually,) not we ourselves. It is God who both *begins* the good work in us, and also will "perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."§

I cannot quit this subject without averting to the very strong words in which our Church insists upon it throughout the whole service, perpetually reminding us that from God all holy desires, as well as good counsels, and all just works do proceed. In the Collect for Sexagesima Sunday: 'O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do.' But we *are* putting our trust in something we do, if we are trusting to obtain God's promises on any conditions of our own performing; and we are again uttering a solemn mockery in the second Collect in Lent, 'Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.' In the Collect for Easter-day, we acknowledge that it is God who 'by his special grace preventing us, doth put into our minds good desires, and that we need his continual help to bring the same to good effect.' In the 4th Sunday after Easter:—'Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing

* Eph. ii. 1.

§ Phil. i. 6.

† Ibid. v. 14.

‡ Matt. xiii. 12.

which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise.' In the 5th—' Grant that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same.' In the 1st after Trinity—' Because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace.' In the 3rd after Trinity—' We, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray.' In the 9th after Trinity—' Grant to us the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful ; that we who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will.' In the 13th after Trinity—' Almighty and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service, &c.' It appears to me that this collect is a peculiarly beautiful lesson ; it so strongly sets forth the doctrine of which I am speaking, and so wisely guards it from abuse, acknowledging in the plainest terms, that as we cannot obtain the promises *by* a holy life, so neither can we obtain them without it. In the 17th after Trinity we pray that ' his grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to good works.' In the 19th—' O God, forasmuch as without thee, we are not able to please thee.' In the 25th—' Stir up, we beseech thee,' &c. But I will not take up more time in multiplying testimonies from this most evangelical service. If these do not prove that our great reformers at least thought us utterly incapable of doing one thing acceptable in the sight of God, except by his free grace first of all putting the desire into our hearts, then enabling us to breathe out that desire in fervent prayer, and then fulfilling the desire and prayer of its own inspiring : if they do not mean that the work of salvation in the heart, is the work of *free* and *sovereign mercy*, from beginning to end, I am at a loss to conceive what they *do* mean, or why they came there at all.

It is absolutely necessary to a clear and full view of this doctrine that we ascribe to the *free*, *sovereign* and *unmerited* grace of God, the first desire after him that ever arose in our hearts, as well as the fulfilling of that desire when expressed in prayer. We must be convinced that *nothing* in the work of salvation is *our own*, but only the gift of God's love to us in Christ Jesus. Christ died for us when we were enemies :* the benefits of his death are applied to us, *for the purpose* of reconciling us, not in consequence of *our* making any advances towards being reconciled. He died for the *ungodly*, for those who were *without strength* ;† without strength to come to Him ; without strength to form so much as a wish to come to Him. The *desire* to come is *given for His sake* ; the *ability* to come is *given for his sake* : the *acceptance on coming* is an acceptance *for the beloved sake of this beloved Saviour*, "without whom we can do nothing."‡ Those who say, ' Grace will be given if we ask, but then asking must precede or procure the given grace,' are in effect robbing God of much of the glory due unto His name. For the power and the

* Rom. v. 10.

† Ibid. v. 6.

‡ John xv. 5.

inclination to ask are of themselves a part of the free gift of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus. They are the beginning of God's work in the heart, and to say that we begin this work, is no other than to say that we can create ourselves anew in Christ Jesus. I will venture to affirm, that if God *waited* to give us His grace till we ask Him for it of our own accord, we should go without it to all eternity.

The great source of error on this head, even amongst serious people, is, that they cannot bring themselves to think they have *nothing of their own* in the work of salvation. Therefore it is, that when constrained to acknowledge that the grace given them *when they seek*, is from God only ; their self-righteousness betakes itself to another strong-hold ; and we find them laying claim to their *asking* and *seeking*, as if *that* at least was the effort of their own will, the spontaneous act of their own power. This is just as if one should take a dead person by the hand, breathe life into him, and lift him up upon his feet ; and that person should make a show of acknowledgment to his benefactor, by allowing to that benefactor the praise of lifting him up *after* he was alive, and keeping him alive ever since, and yet should maintain that *the first breath of all* came into him by his own spontaneous act, by the effect of his own unassisted power. The absurdity of such an assertion, with regard to temporal life, would strike us at once ; but we are not so struck with it in reference to spiritual life; and the reason is this. When we talk of a dead carcass, we know what we are talking about. There it lays before our eyes, incapable of breathing, moving, speaking. We perfectly know what we mean when we say that a dead *body* cannot raise itself to life. But when we speak of a *soul* dead in trespasses and sins, we too often use the phrase merely because we find it in the Scriptures ; without the slightest conception of the awful reality expressed by it. Nor is it till we have ourselves in some measure passed from death unto life, that we begin to perceive the dreadful and close analogy which really exists between the two states of natural and spiritual death. If God were to come to an unconverted person with the question, not, Can these dry bones, but Can these dead souls live ! He would be apt to reply, Why not ? What should hinder them from raising themselves up, and breathing the breath of spiritual life ? But when God has quickened us from our own death in trespasses and sins, our eyes are opened to see what spiritual death really is, and then we learn with trembling awe to reply ; "Lord, thou knowest." This is thy work, it is thou that must make us alive and not we ourselves.

Since then men are universally disposed to go about establishing their own righteousness, how carefully ought we to close up every evenue through which this besetting sin might gain admittance, and rob us of our peace, by leading us to rob Christ of his praise. Many are the windings of our own treacherous hearts ; many are the devices of Satan by which he would tempt us to ascribe to our

own strength, what God has done for us of his mere mercy. Nor let us think that a mistake here can be of trifling importance. God is very jealous for His great name ; and He has declared that if "we will not lay it to heart to give glory to His name," He will send a curse upon us, and will even "curse our blessings."* Many and glorious are the crowns which adorn the sacred head of Immanuel ; let us not try to pluck thence the brightest and fairest of them all, for well does it become this King of kings. When we get to heaven, and receive the crown of glory, we shall be ready enough to cast *that* at His feet, and to say, *Thou only* are worthy. Let us do the same with the crown of grace here ; for surely we have as little to arrogate the one to ourselves as the other.

A few words on a sentiment, not, it is to be hoped, very generally prevalent ; yet as we do find, even in what is called the religious world, some who avowedly profess it, and many more who are secretly, perhaps unconsciously influenced by it ; a brief notice of it may not be unnecessary. I allude to those who, finding the doctrine of free and sovereign grace very fully and strongly set forth in St. Paul's epistles, seem in all their arguments on the subject to abate somewhat of the Divine authority of these epistles, and confine themselves to a few isolated statements from the Gospel, &c., which they deem more consonant to their own views and feelings. To such I would say, Saint Paul is no more responsible for the matter contained in his epistles, than you or I are. These are not, in fact, *St. Paul's epistles* : they are the epistles of *God the Holy Ghost*, faithfully transcribed and delivered to us by His servant Paul. The Holy Ghost, speaking through the medium of Paul, cannot but speak in perfect unison with what He has declared through the medium of Peter or John, or any other of His inspired messengers. He may take up one instrument and lay down another, but the Spirit which speaks in them is the same. He may open the mouth of one of His servants to explain one mystery of His Gospel ; while He makes another more fully to dwell upon and unfold some other mystery : for He divideth unto every man severally as He will. But still the Spirit of the Lord is *One*. He cannot contradict himself, cannot speak contrary to truth, for he is the Spirit of Truth, and is given to lead us into all truth. And of the inspired penmen, one and all, we may say ; "Have *they* any power at all to say any thing ? *The word that God put into their mouths that have they spoken.* They could not go beyond the word of the Lord their God to say less or more."

We shall never become perfectly reconciled to all parts of the word of God until He Himself bestows on us the spirit and temper of a little child, to receive without murmuring, or disputings, or carnal reasonings, whatsoever JEHOVAH the Spirit is pleased to say to us. That Spirit alone can take away the evil heart of unbelief, which prevents us from embracing the *whole* counsel of God, as revealed in his word. It is he that must open our hearts

* Malachi ii. 2.

to attend to *all* the things written in his law. *Then* we shall perceive a connection and a harmony between every part and every doctrine of the Scriptures, which will fill us with ever-increasing wonder and delight. May he thus open our understandings to understand the Scriptures, and to know the things that are *freely given to us of God*.

CHAPTER III.

ON ELECTING GRACE.

THE 17th Article gives so much better an account of the doctrine of Election or Predestination, than could be expressed by any words of mine, that I beg leave to place it at the head of this chapter.

'Predestination to life is the *everlasting purpose* of God, whereby (*before the foundations of the world were laid*) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath *chosen in Christ out of mankind*, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be *called*, according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season; they *through grace obey the calling*; they be *justified freely*, they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

'As the godly consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ is *full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort* to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God; so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation or into recklessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.'

'Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture; and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God.'

The latter part of this article is awfully true, and the warning conveyed by it, should sink into every heart. But what then? Must godly persons renounce or suppress a doctrine clearly revealed in Scripture; strongly enforced by the articles of a church of which they are professed members; and *full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort*, merely because curious and carnal persons will "wrest it, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction?"* At this rate we must renounce every Scripture truth; for there is not one, which, while it is a savor of life unto life unto them that are saved, is not also a savor of death unto death to them that perish.† Therefore we must not be afraid to receive with humility and simplicity *all* that the Scriptures have revealed to us on this subject. Let us then as in a former chapter search this sacred word and see what testimony we can bring from the Three that bear record in Heaven.

God the Father saith of himself by Moses, "that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy," and "will have compassion on whom he will have compassion."‡ God the Son has told us "that none can know the Father, save he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."§ "That to some is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to others it is not given;"|| "that no man can come to him except it were given to him of the Father:"¶ "that all whom the Father giveth him, shall come to him,"** "that he will give eternal life to as many as God hath given him:"|| "that of all which the Father hath given him he will lose nothing, but will raise it up again at the last day;"|| "that many are called, but few chosen :"|| "that God hath an elect people, whom he hath chosen :"|| "that he will avenge his own elect:"¶¶ "that it is impossible finally to deceive his elect:"**** "that he will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other:"|| "that he calleth his own sheep by name,¶¶ and leadeth them out from sin and self; and will bring his other sheep which are yet unborn and they shall hear his voice, and that if any believe not, it is because they are not of his sheep :"||| that "we did not choose him, but he hath chosen us, and ordained us, that we should go and bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain :"||| "that he knows whom he hath chosen :"¶¶¶ and that "his disciples are not of the world, because he hath chosen them out of the world :"**** declares by the pen of St. Luke; that "the Lord added to the church such as should be saved—and that as many as are ordained to eternal life believe :"|||| by that of Peter; that "all God's people are elect by the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit

* 2 Peter. iii. 16.

† 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

‡ Exod. xxxiii. 19. Rom. ix. 5.

§ Matt. x. 27.

|| Ibid. xiii. 11.

¶ John vi. 65.

** John vi. 37.

||| Ibid. xvii. 2.

¶¶ Ibid. vi. 39.

¶¶¶ Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14.

||| Mark xiii. 20.

¶¶¶ Luke xviii. 7.

**** Matt. xxiv. 24.

|||| Ibid. xxiv. 31.

¶¶¶ John x. 3.

¶¶¶¶ John x. 3, 16, 26.

||||| Ibid. xv. 16.

¶¶¶¶¶ Ibid. xiii. 18.

**** John xv. 19. ¶¶¶¶¶ Acts ii. 47; xiii. 47.

unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ;” that they are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ; that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light ;” that “the God of all grace is He who hath called them into his eternal glory by Jesus Christ :”* by James ; that “God of his own will begetteth them with the word of truth,” and that “known unto Him are all his works from the beginning of the world :”† (and if *all*, surely that most wondrous work, which is wrought every time God changes a sinner’s heart) by Jude ; that “the saints are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called :”‡ by the disciple whom Jesus loved, that “they are born again, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God :” that they are “called, and chosen, and faithful ; that their names are written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world ; that if we love God it is because He first loved us.”§ But of all His faithful messengers, God the Holy Ghost hath made choice more especially of St. Paul to dilate upon, and unfold a doctrine which might yet have been learnt from other Apostles, had the writings of St. Paul never existed ; a very small part of whose testimony is as follows :—“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren : moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called ; and whom He called, them He also justified ; and whom He justified, them He also glorified ;”|| compare this with the 17th article above quoted, and say whether the Bible and the church do not unite in ascribing every step of our salvation to God only. “Wherefore there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and if by grace, then is it no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works then is it no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work.”¶

How plainly does the Lord the Spirit here testify the utter impossibility of mixing grace and works. He shows us that if the very least mixture of work could be admitted into the covenant, grace would change its nature, and cease to be grace. It must be *all work, or all grace* ; we cannot make a half-and-half covenant with God. He has offered us these two ; we must be saved by the one,** or perish by the other.†† “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love : having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved, being pre-

* 1 Peter i. 2. ii. 9; v. 10. † James i. 18. ‡ Jude 1.

§ John i. 13. Rev. xvii. 8, 14; xiii. 8; xx. 12, 15; xxi. 27. Luke x. 20. 1 John iv. 10. See also John xii. 39, 40.

¶ Rom. xi. 5, 6.

** Ephes ii. 8.

|| Rom. xiii. 29, 30.
†† Gal. iii. 10.

destinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."* "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began."[†] Time would fail me before I had done bringing forward Scripture testimonies to the doctrine of election; it is so interwoven with every part of holy writ, that it is difficult to take every part separately without impairing its effect. I will, therefore, only remark in conclusion, that our Lord uses the term *chosen* or *elect* no less than ten times in this sense in the New Testament, viz. Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14; xxiv. 31. Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27. Luke xviii. 7. John xiii. 18; xv. 16, 19; that it is of frequent occurrence in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles; and that the word predestinate is used several times by the Apostle Paul. It appears to me also impossible to read the Gospel of St. John, or the Acts of the Apostles through, without perceiving that this doctrine runs like a rich vein through every passage. But while we are bound to embrace *all that the Scriptures teach* on this subject, we must cautiously guard against attempting to be wise *above what is written*, and we should do well to confine ourselves not only to the sense, but as much as possible to the *very words* of Scripture; lest we should darken counsel by words without knowledge. Yet we must neither reject any part of the written *Word of God*, nor try to twist and turn it so as to make it square with our own notions. *As it stands, so* we must receive it; with meekness of love, without partiality, without gainsaying.

Many are firmly persuaded of the truth of this doctrine, who yet shrink from declaring their conviction to others; as if some dangerous effect were to be apprehended from its propagation. The folly of such an apprehension is well pointed out in the following words of an eminent reformer, which I cannot forbear giving, as they afford a specimen of the dignified simplicity, sound judgment, and close reasoning, which shine in almost every part of the Institutes of Calvin; a book which was held in repute as the finest apology for Protestantism that ever appeared, till the names of Calvin and Calvinist came to be held up as mere signs of a party in religion. 'The Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which as nothing necessary and useful to be known is omitted, so nothing is taught which is not beneficial to know. Whatever, therefore, is declared in the Scripture concerning *predestination*, we must be cautious not to withhold from the faithful, lest we appear either to defraud them of the favor of their God, or to reprove and censure the Holy Spirit, for publishing what it would be useful by any means to suppress. Let us, I say, permit the Christian man to open his heart and his ears to all the discourses addressed to him by

* Ephes. i. 3—6, 11.

[†] 2 Tim. i. 9. See also Rom. ix. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Gal. iv. 6. 1 Thess. ii. 12; iv. 7. 2 Thess. i. 11, 12; ii. 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Titus i. 1—3.

God; only with this moderation, that as soon as the Lord closes His sacred mouth he shall also desist from farther inquiry. 'This will be the best barrier of sobriety, if in learning we not only follow the leadings of God, but as soon as He ceases to teach, we give up our desire of learning.' 'I only desire this general admission, that we should never scrutinize those things which the Scriptures have left concealed, nor reject those which are openly exhibited. For it is judiciously remarked by Augustine, that we may safely follow the Scripture, which proceeds like a mother stooping to the weaknesses of a child, that it may not leave our weak capacities behind. But persons who are so cautious or timid as to wish predestination to be buried in silence lest feeble minds should be disturbed, with what pretext, I ask, will they gloss over their arrogance, which indirectly charges God with foolish inadvertency, as though He foresaw not the danger which they suppose they have the penetration to discover? Whoever, therefore, endeavors to raise prejudices against the doctrine of predestination, openly reproaches God, as though something had inconsiderately escaped Him that is pernicious to His church.'

I have been induced to give this extract at some length, because I never met with so beautiful a description of the sober spirit in which the doctrine of election, and indeed every other doctrine, ought to be studied. And also because it shows the extreme folly of shutting our eyes against any revealed truth, for fear of its consequences. If "the man of God" would be "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," he must study, with humble diligence, and receive with ready teachableness, every part of the revealed will of God. "For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."^{*}

And thus it is, that, while the doctrine of predestination is death to those who weary themselves in presumptuous disputings and reasonings about it, there always have been and will be a happy few, who humbly and sincerely feeding upon it, receiving all that the Scripture tells them concerning it, and desiring to know no further, find it health and peace to their souls. It lays them very low at the feet of their Redeemer; brings down the high swelling of their pride and self-esteem; pulls away from under them all those broken reeds upon which they had been used to lean, self-righteousness, self-will, self-dependence; and leaves them no one prop on which to lean for support, whilst coming up out of this wilderness, but the arm of their beloved—that everlasting arm which will surely conduct them to glory. When that arm becomes shortened that it cannot save, or weak that it cannot support; when the arm of Jesus fails and is weary; then they will begin to look around for some other stay; but not till then. Or when they can discover in themselves one single good thing which Jesus did not put there; one reason why he should visit them with such amazing love;

* 2 Timothy, iii. 16, 17.

then they will conclude that His love took its rise from theirs, not theirs from His. But they never will discover one such thing, so long as the Spirit of God illuminates their heart, and brings to light its immense depravity and worthlessness. Therefore, as God's love could not have been excited by any thing in them, they believe it to be an eternal love; that they were called in time, because they were chosen from eternity; and that the name of Jesus is now engraven as a seal upon their hearts, because their names were written on his heart before ever the world was. And when their thoughts stretch forward to the end of this pilgrimage, and they rejoice in the view of the mansions prepared for them in their Father's house, the crown of that rejoicing is this: "we got not the land in possession by our own strength, neither did our own arm save us, but thy right hand, and thy arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favor unto us."* "Thus they rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;" for "God is the glory of their strength, and in His favor their horn is exalted."

I cannot pretend to meet the objections, or to refute the cavils commonly raised, when this doctrine of election is made the subject of discussion; for I did not learn it in the way of carnal reasonings, but by simply taking the Scriptures as I found them, and as the Spirit of God enabled me to receive them. If St. Paul, after descanting on this subject breaks off in an ecstasy of admiration, exclaiming, "how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" we need not wonder if our shallow understanding are incapable of fathoming, our limited capacities of comprehending, our low minds of reaching them. We must be satisfied with believing that it is even so, because "so it seemed good in our Father's sight,"† whatever it may appear in ours. This reason, which appeared satisfactory to our Saviour, may surely satisfy us; or if not, he has vouchsafed an assurance, which may well serve to repress present inquiry into things too high for us. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."‡

That these things are so, I believe, because I find them amongst the revealed things which belong to us and our children forever. How or why they are so, I desire not too closely to inquire, lest I should intrude into the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God. O that he would give unto every one of us that humble and teachable spirit with which a little ignorant child is content to receive his father's lessons, without rudely commenting upon his father's ways, or rashly intruding into his father's secrets! This one thing we know, and with this we may be satisfied: that the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right. But it were preposterous to expect that he should always do that which is right in our eyes, so long as our notions of right and wrong are so utterly confused and perverted as they have been ever since the fall. He himself tells us that the Lord seeth not as man seeth; and that "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomi-

* Psalm xliv. 3.

† Matt. xi. 26.

‡ John xiii. 7.

nation in the sight of God."* It cannot be, so long as his ways are equal, and ours unequal, that his righteous dealings should be in exact accordance with our unrighteous views and sentiments. Instead, then, of wearying ourselves with impotent attempts to bring down his will and counsel to the level of our ideas, our far wiser way will be, to submit our thoughts and ideas to his will, assured that it is holy, just, and good. Yet, since we should be ready to give a reason for every hope that is in us, I will venture to touch on some of the most hackneyed objections to this glorious doctrine; and I pray God that he will help me to show their exceeding vanity and futility.

The objection most frequently urged against the doctrine of predestination is, that it seems to charge the Almighty with injustice and caprice; for if the doom of every person be irrevocably fixed before he comes into the world, why is he punished for what he cannot help? And is it not accusing God of a strange partiality, to suppose him capable of rejecting some and choosing others, before they have done any thing to draw down his wrath, or to conciliate his favor? Now to this objection, as involving the honor of his own name, God himself has deigned to provide us with a sufficient answer. "Thou wilt then say unto me, why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay—but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What, if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?"†

The justice of God in predestination would appear sufficiently clear, if we would but take a fair and impartial view of our own state by nature: that this world is a *guilty* and *ruined* world; and that every creature born into it has a sinful nature born with him, which lays him under the just and dreadful sentence of eternal death. Now, if God foreknew from all eternity, that the children of men would thus become the children of wrath—and determined from all eternity, to save a remnant according to the election of grace; where is the injustice of this proceeding? Is it that he did not determine to save *all*, instead of *some* only? But alas! that *all* are not saved, is a truth of which even the opposers of election must acknowledge their sad conviction. It is that he was influenced entirely by free and distinguishing grace, that he chose the favored remnant *according to his counsel and will*; and not on account of any merit of theirs in seeking or in serving Him? But where is the distinction of merit to be found? It exists nowhere but in the distempered imagination of men. This merit, which men talk about, God cannot find; and he has nowhere ac-

* Luke xvi. 15. † Rom. ix. 19, 23. Job xxxii. 12, 13, 23; xl. 2, 8. Isaiah xlv. 9.

knowledged its existence. For there is no difference, “for all have sinned;” “all the world is guilty before God.” We know that “the whole world lieth in wickedness.”* It appears then that whether we uphold or oppose the doctrine of predestination, we must agree in acknowledging that *all men are not saved*. And if this be the case—if God have determined to save *some* from wrath; and if, for reasons to us inscrutable, he have determined *not* to save *all*; by what motive, I ask, could his choice be directed where *all are equally guilty*; *ALL*, like sheep, have gone astray? where none can repent or turn to Him, unless He gives the grace to do so; and what is that but choosing them? Reason itself tells us that the Scripture account of this mystery can alone be the true one—viz., “that God has mercy on *whom he will* have mercy;” “that he has compassion on *whom he will* have compassion.” That “it is *not of him* that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of *God that sheweth mercy*.” That God begets us of *his own will*. That the saints are *elect* according to the foreknowledge of God. That they are *predestinated* unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself: *according to the good pleasure of his will*: “*being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*.” Thus much we *know*, because thus much is *revealed* to us in the oracles of truth. But at this point we must stay our inquiries. For we are as incapable of entering into the reasons of God’s dealing with us, any farther than he has deigned to unfold them, as an infant is to enter into the counsels of a full grown man. Yes; and a great deal more so. For the one is but the difference between the finite and infinite—between worm and worm; but this is the difference between finite and infinite—between the worm and God.

The case, plainly stated, appears to be this. *All are sinners*. Not only so; but *all love sin*, and drink up iniquity like water. *All say in their hearts to God*—“depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”† Therefore every individual of the human race, without one single exception, is in a state of condemnation before God—a state from which he has neither the *power* nor the *will* to extricate himself. The *whole world* lieth in wickedness—it lieth under the curse, and most justly *deserveth* the curse which God has pronounced against “*every one* who continueth not in *all* things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”‡ The whole, therefore, of Adam’s race, considered as sinners, may be considered as, *by nature*, in a state of reprobation. But blessed forever be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He would not display his justice in the destruction of a *whole world* of sinners. He determined to show also the riches of his glory on certain vessels of mercy, whom he had afore prepared unto glory. He chose some of those worthless and guilty things, called men, the vessels of his mercy. He chose these children of wrath to become the children of grace. He chose them in Christ Jesus long before the founda-

* Rom. iii. 19, 22, 23. 1 John i. 10.

† Job. xxi. 14.

‡ Gal. iii. 10.

tion of the world, he has been calling those chosen vessels (as the time appointed for each came) out from this world ; giving his Son to redeem, and his Spirit to sanctify them, and himself to be their portion forever. Does this wonderful display of His mercy upon a part of Adam's hell-deserving race, take way his right of executing justice upon the remainder of that race ? Should we say, why did he not *pardon all*, when we ought to be amazed at His mercy in not having *condemned all* ? It is of his mercies that we are not all consumed: well may it be asked, who are we that we stand thus replying against God ? When all are as brands *fit for the burning* : if God chose to pluck some as brands out of the fire, shall we say that this act of mercy renders less just the destruction of those who are left ?

Mercy is offered to *all*, (at least in Christian lands;) but such is the desperate malignity of sin, such is the enmity of the heart to God, that *all*, if left to their own *free will* (as it is called,) would shut their ears and hearts against every overture of reconciliation. God, by his special grace, opens the ears and hearts of a chosen remnant, to attend to and embrace the glad tidings of salvation. They come to Jesus, because the Father draws them; and because they come, He saves them to the uttermost. Does all this diminish the wickedness of those who do *not* come? or detract from God's justice in punishing them for not coming ? He sends his Son to man with the largest proffers of mercy. His long-suffering endures them, spares them, waits upon them, till it has been proved to men and angels, that such is the perverseness of man's *will* that he *will not* accept of life. Then He gives them over to the natural and necessary consequences of their own choice. But *all* are not thus given over: a remnant, a seed is chosen in Christ, in whom, *to show forth his own glory*, he subdues the rebellious will, takes away the natural equity, and accepts them, not for their own sake, but for Christ's.

To sum up what has been said, the condemnation of mankind is *a just and deserved condemnation*: the salvation of the remnant chosen out from mankind is a *free and undeserved salvation*. Every man shall have *perfect justice* done to him; and if in the case of some, justice and mercy have met together, let no one dare to murmur, for God has a right to do what he will with his own.

If, after all these considerations, the doctrine of election still seems to imply injustice and partiality in God's dealings toward us, I would ask, is there any other scheme upon which his dealings can be made less mysterious and inexplicable ? Are the difficulties which surround predestination more insurmountable than those which present themselves in every part of the providential dispensations of God ? Might not the same temper which objects to the electing grace of God, carp also at his injustice and partiality in revealing to England the abundance of light and truth, while he has left so many dark places in the earth full of the habitations of cruelty ?

Might not such persons arraign his equity in giving to some every possible advantage of a religious education, and leaving others to every possible disadvantage of an irreligious one? Or (for there are no bounds to the presumptuous spirit of inquiry) why do they not at once take the Almighty to task for having suffered evil to get into the world at all? For it is certain than evil *has* got into the world; and its existence is, after all, the great difficulty; of which the opposers of predestination can give us no better account than the believers in this doctrine are able to do; for we know nothing but what the Scriptures have revealed to us; and if they have not gone back to the origin of evil, the reason must be, that instruction on that point was not necessary for us.

But I stop; he that reproveth God, let him answer it. All these mysteries can be accounted for only by referring them to the inscrutable mystery of God's predestination. To the eye of carnal reason they lie involved in the thickest obscurity; but the eye of faith sees in them no darkness at all. For faith, instead of vainly striving to pull these things down to the level of reason, so far above reason; resolves every difficulty into the *gracious will* or *wise permission* of God, and *seeks to know no farther*. How many things are there which I know not, nor can by any searching find out to perfection! But *Jesus knows them all*. With this assurance I sit down fully satisfied. He will teach them to me hereafter, as I am able to bear it. In the meantime I will trust, and not be afraid. All that my God says to me I will implicitly believe, for I know that every word of God is pure. "All the words of his mouth are in righteousness: there is nothing froward or perverse in them: they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge."* When I come to see God as he is, and to know as I myself am known, I shall find that all these mysteries of his word and will were only 'dark with excessive light.' In the meantime, till I have the eagle eye that can gaze undazzled at his glories, I will view them at humble distance through the glass of faith, which he has given me for this purpose; nor will I dare to repine, because "I can only see them in a glass darkly."^t Thus faith removes every objection, stills every murmur, and silences every doubtful thought. I have dwelt the longer upon this subject, from a conviction that the grand reason with most people for rejecting the doctrine of election, is, *not* that they *cannot find it in the Bible*, but that being unable to reconcile it to their own *pre-conceived and imperfect* notions of equity and fitness, they come to the Bible *predetermined not to find it there*.

But another, and a heavy charge too, is brought against this doctrine: that it encourages people to continue in sin. The same charge was brought against free grace in the days of the Apostle Paul; and is answered fully in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. See also Rom. iii. 8, 31. It cannot be denied that there are some wretched persons who turn the grace of God into

* Prov. viii. 8, 9.

^t 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

licentiousness ; but it is the grace of God for all that, and, as such, cannot have an unholy tendency. We are not the less commanded to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, because some use this liberty only as an occasion to the flesh, only for a cloak of maliciousness. Such persons would suck poison and death from the very tree of life. But real believers in the doctrine of election, I mean those who derive their ideas on it from the *Bible only*, and measure every thing by this standard, have not so learned Christ. They know that "God hath not called them to uncleanness, but to holiness."* They know that "whom God foreknew, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son ;"† and therefore they search themselves daily, to see whether this pure—this holy image be forming in their hearts. They know that if God "chose them before the foundation of the world :" it was "that they might be *holy and without blame before him in love* ;"‡ and therefore they are encouraged to be importunate with him for more of that holy, blameless, and loving temper, to which he has chosen them. Thus they have "the witness in themselves :"§ they have "the earnest of the Spirit :"|| they know that they are sons, "because God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts :"¶ they know God's love to them—by their love to Him. They look upon their own good works as the *fruit* of God's electing love—not as the root from whence it sprang ; and far from considering them as *any part of the payment* of their mighty debt, they receive them as a fresh load of obligation, for which they will still be owing him more and more to all eternity. Yet they know full well that good works are necessary as the *evidences* of their election ; for how can they tell that Christ abideth in them except by the spirit which he has given them ? In proportion then as they find their hearts panting after holiness, in that very proportion they are enabled to maintain the sweet assurance that God has chosen them to be partakers of his holiness. Thus they give all diligence to make their calling and election sure : that is, not to make God sure whether he will elect and call them ; but to make themselves sure whether God has elected and called them.

Nearly allied to this objection, is one raised by many against the doctrine of election, that it either lifts men up with an overweening arrogance and presumption ; or else causes them to sink into the depths of despair. But when a poor sinful creature feels his heart running over with sorrow for sin, and desires after holiness ; when his soul, once taken up with the world, is now absorbed in the love of Jesus, so as to desire nothing besides him in heaven or in earth : whether is it more arrogant to say, *I turned myself* from sin unto God ; or to say, *God of his infinite mercy turned me* ? To say, *I myself* sought God out and chose him, and therefore he accepted me ; or to say, God sought me out because he had chosen me in Christ Jesus before the world began ; and, therefore, I am

* 1 Thess. iv. 7.

§ 1 John. v. 10.

† Rom. viii. 29.

|| 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5.

‡ Ephes. i. 4.

¶ Gal. iv. 6.

now enabled to seek and choose him? And as every redeemed sinner knows that the love he feels in his heart to God was none of his own implanting: for all that *he* could produce was only *enmity and more enmity*: is it so very presumptuous to conclude, that he loves God, because God *first* loved him? Rather, would it not be the height of presumption to contradict Scripture and common sense, by making the opposite conclusion? And, if we allow the truth of St. John's assertion, that if *we* love God, it is because he *first* loved us—whence shall we date the *commencement* of this love? Was it some sudden impulse that came into his mind *unawares and unforeknown*, as human imaginations arise? Did it begin at our birth, or spring up at the moment of our conversion? What! could not *Omniscience foreknow* the objects of his love? Must he wait till the work of his own hands is brought upon the stage of existence, before he can tell how it will turn out? or whether he is making a vessel to honor, or one to dishonor? a vessel of mercy, or a vessel of wrath? Will those, who charge believers in election with arrogance, explain how they themselves, without the greatest arrogance, can assert that *Omniscience* cannot, or will not *foresee*; and that *Omnipotence* cannot or will not *decide* the fate of *His own creatures*? For, if we love God because he *first* loved us, and if this love of His *was not from all eternity*, then there must be a time when he did *not* love us: that is, there must have been a time when either the mind of the *unchangeable God* was *different* from what it is now; or else a time when the *Almighty* and *All-knowing God* could not *foresee* the objects of his favor; or *was unable to make up his mind* whether he would love them or not. The difficulties, which absurdities like these present on every side, are far greater, and consequently far more dangerous, than those which attend the plain Bible truth, that “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;” and that the saints were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. As long as I have the Bible in my hand, I cannot think the thoughts and counsels of the Eternal are the mere creatures of a day; the offspring of time and chance, veering about with every change of our most changeable hearts. I must conclude that, like their Supreme Author they *stretch from eternity to eternity*: and it is only the belief that they were thus *from everlasting*, that emboldens me to hope that they will stand firm *to everlasting*. Again, is it more arrogant to say that God's love to us took its origin from any good thing *perceived* or *foreseen* in us; or to say that every good thing that ever has appeared, or shall appear in us, takes its origin from this infinite—this eternal—this incomprehensible love of God? I desire indeed no other account of the connection subsisting between God's love to me, and mine to Him, than that which He has himself vouchsafed to give: “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.”*

* Jer. xxxi. 3.

How can a doctrine be said to encourage presumption and arrogance, which strips off every pretension to assist in saving ourselves, and sends us naked, empty, and helpless to the cross of Christ; leaving us no plea, except His free unmerited grace and mercy? What more humbling, than a doctrine which is perpetually reminding us, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" and "what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"* But the great charge against believers in predestination seems to be that they think *themselves* predestined to salvation, and adjudge all the rest of the world to eternal misery. God forbid! they dare not take upon themselves to judge others; yea, they judge not their own selves, except by that unerring word which God has given them for this purpose:—(of course, I only speak of sincere Christians; false professors will pervert this, as well as every other doctrine.) It is true, that many happy souls are enabled to triumph in full assurance of faith; and to say with St. Paul, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me."† But these, as I have before said, venture to think themselves the elect people of God, only because they find the *character* of God's elect deeply engraven on their hearts. "They cry unto him night and day."‡ They *love much*, whence arises a sure and well-founded hope that *much has been forgiven them*. But this very circumstance forbids them to despair of others. Set before them the vilest, the most hardened sinner; such a one as the righteous and moral of this world would separate from their company; and they would say, 'But for the free mercy of God, I had been as vile as he. Never was there a darker, or a colder, or a harder heart, than mine was by nature. If then God has shined into my dark heart, made my cold heart to burn with love, melted my heart into a willing obedience; why may I not hope that He will do the same for this poor sinner before me? Divine grace has not yet called him, but it may do so this very day: nay, who knows but God may have appointed me to be the happy, humble instrument of his conversion? Therefore I will use every means, though it may seem as hopeless as Ezekiel's preaching to the dry bones. I will plant and water, for though *I cannot command an increase, God can.*§ In the morning I will sow my seed, and in the evening I will not withhold my hand, for I know not which means shall prosper, this or that, or whether my God will bless both alike.'||

Thus, far from causing us to despair of the salvation of others, or to be careless in using every means of doing them good, this belief in God's electing love, is the only thing that can set us to work with any rational hope of success. For if the changing of a sinner's heart depend upon our own exertions, or upon His disposition to benefit by our persuasion: the task of addressing him will be a hopeless and a thankless one indeed. But if God have *from the*

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

§ 1 Rom. iii. 6, 7.

† Gal. ii. 20.

|| Eccl. xi. 6.

‡ Luke xviii. 7.

beginning chosen that sinner unto salvation, (and we have no right to infer otherwise) he has also appointed the *means* whereby this salvation shall be effected, and those means *shall be blessed*, though every human probability be against them. Let not then a doctrine be denounced as uncharitable, which excites its followers to be always abounding in every labor of love, by the certain assurance it affords them, that their labor shall not be vain in the Lord. It must not be denied that they *are* afraid to give flattering titles, or to appear to think well of the spiritual condition of those in whom, as yet, they can perceive none of the things which accompany salvation. To be thus saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace, is what the world calls being very kind and charitable: but the Bible calls it “hating our brother in our heart.”* This charity, so highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God. But that love, which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in the hearts of his people, constrains them to overstep the narrow bounds of worldly kindness and courtesy. It causes rivers of waters to run down their eyes, for those who keep not God’s law. And while they weep and pray for them, they dare not but tell them of their danger. But do they urge them to despair? Far, far from it. To despair indeed of help from themselves, from every thing short of Jesus Christ; but not to despair of His willingness to receive and pardon them! They tell sinners that His arms are wide open to embrace all who come to him, and they lift up their prayers unto God, that he would make them come to Jesus. They tell them that he is able to save to the uttermost; that with him there is plenteous redemption; that he waits to be gracious. Yes, they beseech them in Christ’s name to be reconciled to God. Nor do they beseech the less fervently, because they know that the grace of God alone can give effect to their persuasions. Not the less earnestly do they assure sinners, that there is mercy for them, if they will but lay hold on it; grace for them, if they will but ask for it; grace to pardon all their sins, and to subdue them; but not grace to pardon sin without subduing it: this they dare not say; and therefore it is, that the very same persons who charge them with holding doctrines which tend to encourage sin, will often, by a strange inconsistency, accuse them of unnecessary strictness and moroseness in decrying the innocent pleasures of the world. As if the pleasures of a world lying in wickedness could be altogether innocent; or as if they could afford any real enjoyment to a soul which daily quenches its thirst at a fountain of delights which the world knows not of—a soul possessing spiritual tastes and desires: in short “which is not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world.”†

We now come to the remaining part of the above-mentioned charge against election, viz., that it drives people to despair. A wrong and carnal view of it may; but a right and spiritual reception of it is the surest preservative against despair. For if God is to love us for something in ourselves, sure I am, that he will never

* Lev. xix. 17.

† John xvii. 16.

love us at all : for in us dwelleth no good thing. But if he loves us according to his own good will and pleasure, then is our eternal happiness secure. Again, if we come to Jesus of ourselves, I see no reason to hope that we shall endure unto the end. The frailty and inconsistency of our nature render it more than probable that we shall again go away from him. And thus this everlasting love, if it depend on our conduct, must vary according to our changeable affections ; and that Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, may love us *one* day, and cast us off the next ; may be disposed this day to say to us, "come, ye blessed of my Father," and the very next day may frown us from his presence with "depart, ye cursed." Is not this discouraging ? On the other hand, if we come to Jesus, because the Father hath given us to Jesus, and himself draws us to Jesus, then we may be assured that he will hold us fast to the end ; for he who is the truth has declared that, "of all whom the Father hath given him he will not lose one, but will raise them up again at the last day."^{*}

When any one feels his heart drawn in strong desires after God, what can be more contrary to despair than a doctrine which teaches him to believe that he never could have been thus drawn, unless God had loved him with an everlasting love ? If, indeed, believers in election professed to pry into the secrets of futurity ; to open the Lamb's book of life, and tell which names are written there, and which are blotted thence ; such unwarrantable presumption would lead to the most frightful consequences. But on the contrary, they well know that they cannot say of the vilest sinner, this man is not a chosen vessel unto the Lord ; therefore they hope against hope, and strong in faith, giving glory to God, they go on, regardless of every discouragement, inviting sinners to come to Him, and assuring them that "whosoever will, may come and take of the water of life freely."[†]

Feebly as I have handled this intensely interesting subject, I trust I have said enough to prove that the doctrine of predestination, if we cleave simply to the Scripture statement concerning it, does not draw after it all the train of evils which have been represented as its necessary consequences ; that it involves no injustice on the part of God ; that it neither drives men into licentiousness, presumption, uncharitableness, nor despair. On the contrary, that a simple reception of it tends to stop every cavil against God's justice ; affords the strongest incentives to holiness and self-abasement ; and is rather fitted to fill the bosom with the sweetest hope, than to render it the gloomy abode of despair.

But supposing even that no satisfactory answer could be found to these and other objections, still it is our duty as believers in the Bible ever to bear in mind that the most plausible objections against a doctrine do by no means amount to a refutation of its truth. For "the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man," and even those who are in some degree spiritual, must often

* John vi. 39.

† Rev. xxii. 17.

feel that they are but "fools, and slow of heart to understand" the deep counsels of God. The real question then for our consideration, as believers in the truth of God's word, is not, whether a doctrine be liable to this or that objection; but whether it be, or be not clearly revealed in that word. If it be not a part of the will of God revealed to us in the Scriptures, then must it be utterly abhorred and rejected, though an angel from heaven were to preach it to us. But if the doctrine be plainly laid down, and strongly insisted on in the Bible, what signify objections, and dreaded consequences? All that is in God's word we are bound to receive and teach, without fear of consequences. The truths which God has not scrupled to reveal, we need not scruple to embrace, nay, we must embrace them with meekness and affection; as a part of that ingrafted word which is able to save our souls. We may safely leave the consequences to Him. He is abundantly able without our help to provide against any evil results that may ensue from a doctrine of his own revealing. Let us not seek to be wiser than God.

To conclude; we contend not for the doctrine of election, as held by this or that particular sect; or even as handed down to us in the strong and beautiful language of the reformers of our church; but simply and solely as it is set forth in the very words of the oracles of God, that is, in the words of God himself. We cannot be too careful to expound our views of this doctrine, in the very words, as well as according to the exact sense of Scripture: then, if any differ, and would convince us of error, they must find some other Scriptures, in which the truths contained in ours are omitted. For let it be remembered, that as long as we keep close to the Bible, we are not answerable for the objections that may be made against the Bible. If the doctrine can be proved to be there, that ought abundantly to suffice for the conviction of those who believe that all Scripture was written by the inspiration of God. When God speaks, man's part is to submit, not to object. To oppose or deny any thing that is revealed in God's word, is to make God a liar. To cavil or murmur at it, is to rebel against God. To be ashamed or afraid of it, is to call in question the goodness and wisdom of God in revealing it. To receive it as little children, and humbly pray for light to understand it, is the way to become wise unto salvation. Let those who profess to believe the Bible, instead of wearying themselves with carnal reasonings for and against the doctrine of predestination, meekly consult their Bibles, and see whether the doctrine be there or not. And may the Spirit of truth lead them into the saving knowledge of this and every other truth, for His mercies' sake in Christ Jesus!

It was my intention to have concluded this little treatise with a few words on the final perseverance of God's elect: but this doctrine is so clearly implied in that of predestination, that it seems unnecessary to dwell on it very largely. For it is impossible to conceive that God will cast off in time those whom He has chosen from eternity. Perseverance is a necessary consequence of predes-

tination, and accordingly we find that the Scriptures generally mention them in connection with, and in dependence on, each other. It is thus clearly expressed in John vi. 37, 39, 44, 65, "no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him ; except it were given him of my Father. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.* This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that *of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*" Again, John xv. 16, "*ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,* that ye should go and bring forth fruit :" here is election : "and that *your fruit should remain;*" here is perseverance. "Moreover, whom He did *predestinate,* them he also *called :* and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified."* So then, if there be truth in God's word, those who are predestinated, are in every instance, without exception, *called, justified, and finally glorified;* and this could not be, if they did not persevere to the last ; for he only that "*endureth to the end* shall be saved."† Indeed, how absurd, how impossible it is to separate these two truths ! For if the saints are thus elect according to the foreknowledge of God ; and if they are yet subject to fall away, and perish at the last : then is the foreknowledge of God subject to fail ; and his predestination or purpose from all eternity, to be frustrated.

We may therefore comfort our souls in the full assurance "that *faithful* is he that calleth us, who also will do it." That "God is faithful, by whom we were called into the fellowship of His Son." "Being confident of this very thing, that *He which hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ ; will confirm us unto the end,* that we may be blameless in the day of Jesus Christ ;" for "*He* hath declared that He will never leave nor forsake us ;" and that "*He* will put his fear in our hearts, that *we shall not depart from him.*"‡ Since, therefore, the connection between these two doctrines is so close and intimate, that it is impossible to adopt the first of them, without embracing the other, we must account for every apparent final falling away after the reception of God's grace, as the beloved apostle has instructed us to do. "*They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us : but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.*"§ Jesus giveth unto his sheep "eternal life ; and *they shall never perish ;* neither shall any man pluck them out of his hands."|| If then any persons, after *appearing* to believe, finally die in a state of unbelief, the reason is evident : it is because they *are not, never were* of Christ's sheep ; even as Christ himself hath told us.¶ "*Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*"** But if a wolf in sheep's

* Rom. viii. 30.

+ Matt. x. 22.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 24. 1 Cor. i. 9. 1 Cor. i. 8. Heb. xiii. 5. Jer. xxxii. 40, which compare with Heb. viii. 8, 10, 11.

§ 1 John ii. 19.

|| John x. 28.

¶ Ibid. x. 26.

** Luke xii. 32.

clothing get among the flock, it does not follow that *he* shall inherit the kingdom, nor is his coming short of it a falling away of God's elect; but only a proof that, in spite of his specious appearance, he never belonged to them. Such-a-one's falling away is no falling from grace, but only a return to his natural propensities, "as the dog returns to his own vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."^{*} And thus it is whenever professors *finally* fall. Their specious outside was such, perhaps, as to deceive not only themselves, but even the very elect: but it could not deceive God. The Lord *knoweth* them that are his. The Good Shepherd knows his sheep, and his piercing eye will find out every intruder and drive them from the fold. God is not mocked. This man was *all along* sowing to the flesh; and *therefore* it is, that he is finally left of the flesh to reap corruption.[†]

If we carefully examine the passages which are supposed to militate against this doctrine, we shall find that not one of them is really opposed to it; because not one of them supposes the apostate ever to have been endued with saving grace. A comparison of Heb. vi. 4—8, with the parable of the sower, may convince us that the fallers away there mentioned, are only very aggravated cases of the stony and thorny ground hearers of the parable. It is to be remarked, that St. Paul does not compare them to earth, which having once drank in the rain from heaven, and brought forth good fruit, became afterwards barren and unfruitful; but he compares them to that which, unsoftened by the rain from heaven which falls upon it, brings forth nothing but thorns and briars, as its natural and sole production. Such earth is not good ground become bad; it is bad ground which has never been made good. And it receives the curse of barrenness. The barren fig-tree is spared from year to year, till the heavenly husbandman has digged about it and dressed it: yet we are told, that if it continue barren under all these advantages, a time will come, when even Jesus will consent that it be cut down: when even Jesus, coming to the fig-tree, and beholding *no fruit*, but *only leaves*, will say in his wrath, "*Let no fruit grow on this tree henceforward forever.*" So this ungrateful soil, on which the rain from heaven has been perpetually falling, but on which it has ever fallen in vain, shall at length be left to the consequences of its own obduracy, and no further pains bestowed upon it. And thus it was with the apostate professors of whom St. Paul speaks. These had tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost; that is, partakers of his miraculous influences through the laying on of the hands of the apostles:—(for that no participation of his saving influences is here spoken of is evident from the 9th verse). They had "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come:" that is, "they had heard the word, and anon with joy received it."[‡] Yet all this while they had none of those "things which accompany

* 2 Peter ii. 22.

† Gal. vi. 8.

‡ Matt. xiii. 20.

salvation."* Their hearts were all the time like the stony ground in which the good seed takes no root; or like the ground whence the thorns and briars have never been cleared, and which must inevitably choke the good seed, and make it unfruitful. Therefore says St. Paul to such false-hearted professors, *let them beware*. For after they have tried God's patience to a certain extent, his Spirit will no longer strive with them. They are as sure to fall away, as a plant that has no root is sure to wither. And when God thus permits them to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and they are left to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; then it will be impossible for any efforts of ours to renew them to repentance; for those whom God thus leaves to themselves, will go on hardening themselves forever. That this is the sense of his words, is evident from the context, Heb. vi. 1—4, the meaning of which seems to be, it is of no use to be perpetually laying the foundation of your faith, and going back to the first rudiments of the doctrine of Christ for the sake of those way-side, stony-ground, or thorny-ground hearers, in whom the good seed will never come to perfection. Let us therefore leave the first principles, and go on to perfection, for their sakes, who having received the word, and understood it, are now prepared to receive farther supplies of light and knowledge; who having in them the things which accompany salvation, will go on from strength to strength.

One thing has especially struck me in this and similar passages. Amidst all the gifts and graces mentioned, *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* is never once hinted at, as having formed any part of the religion of these false-hearted professors. Yet a simple trust in Jesus is the grand evidence of our being in a state of grace. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life."† Now should these pages meet the eye of one of my dear Christian brethren, whose mind, from the weakness of his faith, or the strength of temptation, may be harassed by passages such as these. it is to this point of a *simple belief in Jesus*, that I would particularly draw his attention.

The sense of your weakness and helplessness fills you with dismay. You often feel that, like one of the saints of old, you are ready to halt; your feet seem almost gone; your steps about to slide.. The candle of the Lord has ceased to shine upon you, and you exclaim in your haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. You look, perhaps, for gifts and graces, as evidences of your spiritual condition; but you feel that you have none to produce. Perhaps you have been a backslider from the ways of God, and have gone on forwardly in the way of your own heart. And now, all, all seems gone, save a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which having set yourself down as the adversary of the Lord, you are daily expecting to devour you. But, beloved, though in the agony of your self-abasement and condemnation, you cannot find a single spiritual grace residing within you, can you not recollect a time when

* Heb. vi. 9.

† John iii. 36.

your faith laid hold on Jesus for salvation? when putting away all confidence in your own deservings, and casting yourself, as a miserable, guilty, and helpless sinner, at the foot of his cross, you trusted yourself unreservedly to him for pardon, righteousness and strength? If you have thus done, you have placed yourself in the hands of one who will hold you fast to all eternity. *He will never let you go,* though your weak and treacherous heart may sometimes seem to have let go its hold of him. Take comfort, then, and encourage yourself in the Lord your God. Be assured that the false professors, to whom you would compare yourself, *never had one grain of this saving faith.* Though your faith be weak and trembling, yet be not afraid, *only believe.* For look what comfortable words our Saviour Christ speaks unto you—"this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and *I will raise him up at the last day.*"*

If you cannot feel sure that you have ever exercised this simple unreserved trust in your Lord and Saviour, endeavor now to commit yourself into his hands. Instead of tormenting yourself with so many vain fears, cast yourself *anew* on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, as if you had never been to him before. Fall, just as you are, into the arms of his mercy. Say unto him, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." If you can do nothing more, lie passive at his feet, until his pitying eye shall look down upon you, and his gentle hand shall raise you from the dust. Trust in him, though he slay you. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

There is another passage in Hebrews (x. 26—29), which is sometimes brought forward to prove that we may fall away, after having received the knowledge of the truth. But this knowledge is evidently no *saving* knowledge. We may receive the *knowledge of the truth*, without receiving and embracing the truth *itself.* The plain meaning of the passage seems to be, that to those who sit under the light of the Gospel without benefiting by it, to them it shall be a savor of death unto death; that if when Christ has been offered, and his sacrifice made known to us, we reject that means of salvation, there remaineth no further sacrifice for sin, "no other name under heaven by which we can be saved."[†] If we will not be reconciled through Christ, God has provided no other way of reconciliation.

Neither has the passage Heb. xii. 15—17, any real difficulty in it. For Esau's rejection of his birthright, was but the natural effect of his carelessness of the heavenly blessings contained in it. He had never really valued his birthright; it was as a pearl cast before swine, which he readily relinquished for the food suited to his swinish nature. Moreover it did but serve to justify God's predestination concerning him; for he had declared, before even Esau was born, that the elder should serve the younger. Esau's case, there-

* John vi. 40.

† Acts iv. 12.

fore, was not one of apostasy ; but his conduct, in this instance, was only a consequence of his former obduracy.*

Nor does the dreadful description in 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, allude to a falling away from grace once received. For grace had never cleansed those polluted hearts. The earthly, sensual, devilish nature, had never been, in the smallest degree removed. This affords no instance of sheep permitted to stray everlasting from the fold ; for *these*, we are informed, were but dogs returned to their own vomit—swine, that had been outwardly washed, to their wallowing in the mire.

In Luke xi. 21, 22, we are told, that “when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace ; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh away all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil ;” that is, that Satan keeps undisturbed possession of man’s heart, till Christ, who is stronger than he, forcibly ejects him thence, and himself enters into that soul, and dwells and reigns there forever. In the 24th, 25th, and 26th verses of the same chapter, the unclean spirit is represented as voluntarily going out of a man, and afterwards returning with seven other spirits more wicked than himself ; so that the last state of that man is worse than the first. The former of these passages may serve to explain and illustrate the latter, which has sometimes been supposed to describe a state of apostasy after grace. In the first instance (*that of real conversion,*) the strong man armed *keepeth* his palace, and is only driven out by the coming of “one stronger than he ;” who, having possessed himself of the palace, will hold fast his blood-bought possession. Satan can never resume his dominion ; because, let him come when he will to that man’s heart, he finds it occupied by “a stronger than himself,” who will never let him set his foot there. In other words, when Christ really takes up his abode in a soul, Satan’s power over it is gone forever. He can no longer say, ‘I will return to *my house* whence I came out’ for he knows that the house is now *Christ’s house*, and must remain so, till Satan is stronger than Christ. But the second case described is widely different. Here the unclean spirit has secure possession of the soul ; he goes in, and comes out at his pleasure. He has no need to keep his palace so carefully ; because he sees no one to oppose his right and title to it. He leaves the man for a time ; and, when weary of his absence, he says, ‘I will return to my house whence I came out.’ And mark the circumstance of his return : he findeth it “empty, swept, and garnished.”† Some of its outward abominations have been cleared away during his absence : it has been swept with the broom of self-righteousness, and garnished with some fancied good works—some carnal desires or other for obtaining God’s favor. But where is the “stronger than the strong man ?” Who

* It should be remembered also, that the ‘*repentance*’ referred to a change of mind in Isaac, not in himself; compare verse 17, with Gen. xxvii. 35—40. The example has therefore no direct connection with spiritual apostasy.

† Matt. xx. 44.

shall keep the unclean spirit out of an empty house ? What wonder if, finding it thus empty, and none to oppose his entrance, he go in and dwell there with seven other spirits more wicked than himself ? To divest the subject of metaphor, the soul of this man, left for a time by Satan, and subjected to some self-devised purification, may seem to himself and others to be "washed from his filthiness ;"** may be adorned with a specious appearance of grace. But there is *no Christ* in that soul, and therefore there never can really have been any grace. The doors of that heart have never been lifted up to let the King of glory in. The man is of himself wholly without strength to resist the attack of his spiritual adversary ; and as he has never applied for help to "one that is mighty," what wonder if Satan lead him captive at his will ? This is not then the case of a soul which *having received Christ*, has fallen away from him ; but of one who has *never received Christ at all*. St. Paul says, "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves : know ye not your own selves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobate ?" Now Jesus Christ was not in this man ; therefore his state, at the time of the return of the evil spirit, was not that of the elect of God ; nor need his fall be an occasion of stumbling to any who know that Christ abideth in them by the Spirit which he hath given them.

The true use of the awful passages which we have been considering, is to stir up every professing disciple of the Lord Jesus carefully to examine the state of his own soul. For these Scriptures show us how far—how very far a person may proceed in an apparently religious course, without having any of those things that *accompany salvation*. Let us not try ourselves by any uncertain standard. Strong convictions, highly-excited feelings, fair appearances of our conduct, may exist ; while all the time we have neither part nor lot in the matter, because our hearts are not right in the sight of God. But "hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."† "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."‡ "And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."§ "We know that we have passed from death unto life ; because we love the brethren."|| "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."¶ We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."** Has God given us this faith ? Have we "a living faith."†† Does it enable us to endure, "as seeing him who is invisible ?"‡‡ To "look not at the things which are seen and temporal ; but at the things which are unseen and eternal ?"§§ Does it "work by love ;" "overcome the world ;" "quench the fiery darts of the devil ?"||

* Prov. xxx. 12.

† John ii. 3.

‡ 1 John iv. 13.

§ Gal. v. 22, 23.

|| 1 John iii. 11.

¶ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

** 1 Peter i. 5.

†† James ii. 26.

‡‡ Heb. xi. 27.

§§ 2 Cor. iv. 18.

||| Gal. v. 6. John v. 4. Eph. vi. 16.

These are some of the marks which God has given us to examine ourselves by. These are things which do accompany salvation. "Every plant," says Jesus, "which my heavenly Father *hath not planted*, shall be rooted up."^{*} Would we know whether we are thus planted only to be rooted up; or whether we are "trees of righteousness, *the planting of the Lord*;"[†] "which shall still bring forth fruit in old age; and shall, to the end, be fat and flourishing?"[‡] Let us examine whether we be *filled with the fruits of righteousness which are, by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*"[§]

I would, in conclusion, most earnestly beseech all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, not to dishonor their Lord by doubting of his faithfulness to keep them to the end. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."^{||} If he loved us yesterday, he loved us to-day, and he will love us forever; and, as long as his love to us lasts, so long will ours to him: for ours is the effect of his. As long as he loves us with an everlasting love, so long with loving-kindness will he draw us; and, as long as he draws us, we shall run after him. Let us not stagger at the promises of God, through unbelief; but let us be strong in faith, giving glory to God: glory to the love which first brought us out of our low estate; glory to the faithfulness which will never leave us, till it has perfected that which concerns us. And when we are assaulted by foes within and without, and hemmed in by so many dangers, that we are ready to exclaim, "I shall one day perish by the hand of the enemy;" even then let us against hope believe in hope, that the Lord shall deliver us from every evil work, and will preserve us unto his heavenly kingdom.[¶]

Let the weak and trembling believer look well to every part of the everlasting covenant, and lay hold of the strong consolation contained in it. Let him remember who are the parties in this covenant: the Trinity in unity on the one hand; and the man Christ Jesus, who is also Jehovah Jesus, appearing on behalf of the children of the covenant, on the other. For the Saints are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."^{***} they are admitted into the outward pale of the covenant (by the sign of baptism) "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."^{††} and they are made partakers of the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost."^{‡‡} According to the "counsel" and "eternal purpose" of this triune Jehovah was the everlasting covenant established; "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."^{§§} "whose counsel endureth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations."^{|||} "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."^{¶¶}

* Matt. xv. 13.

† Isa. lxi. 3.

‡ Psalm xcii. 14.

§ Phil. i. 11.

¶ Heb. xiii. 8.

|| 2 Tim. iv. 18.

** Peter i. 2.

†† Matt. xxviii. 19.

‡‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

§§ Eph. i. 5, 9, 11, and iii. 11.

||| Psalm xxxiii. 11.

¶¶ James i. 17.

" who changeth not :"* " who is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent :"† " the God that cannot lie :"‡ " the Lord God of truth :"§ " whose word is true from the beginning, and every one of his righteous judgments endureth forever :"|| " who will be ever mindful of his covenant :"¶ for he is " the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy ."** " A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he ."†† This covenant-keeping God is our Father, for he is the " God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the other party in the covenant ; yea, himself the Surety of the covenant of peace ; our Surety for good. This Surety of ours has performed his part, that is, our part in the everlasting covenant. He has been " cut off, but not for himself; has made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness ."†† Justice, by releasing our Surety from the prison of the grave, and permitting him forever to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, has proclaimed herself fully satisfied, and unable to claim from him or from us one jot or one tittle more in the way either of doing or of suffering .§§ " Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us ."||| And he is able to " save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them :"¶¶ and that the Father " heareth him always ."**** He is gone " to appear in the presence of God for us ; "††† to be our advocate with the Father ;†††† our " High Priest over the house of God ."†††† Moreover " it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell :"|||| and " out of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace ."¶¶¶ " All the promises " of the covenant " in Him are yea, and in Him, amen , "**** for God hath declared that " his covenant shall stand fast with him ."††††† " As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord ; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever ."††††† Thus " ordered in all things and sure " §§§§ is the everlasting covenant which God hath made with his people. It was " confirmed of God in Christ before the world was ."||||| confirmed by the promise and oath of God, those two " immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie :"¶¶¶¶ and being thus confirmed, " none shall ever disannul, or add to it ."***** " My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn

* Mall. iii. 6.

† Num. xxiii. 19.

‡ Titus i. 2.

§ Psalm xxxi. 5.

|| Psalm cxix. 160.

¶ Psalm cxi. 5.

** Deut. vii. 9. 1 Kings viii. 23. Neh. i. 5. Dan. ix. 4. ¶ Deut. xxxii. 4.

||| Dan. ix. 24, 26.

¶¶ Rom. iv. 25.

||| Rom. viii. 34.

¶¶¶ Heb. vii. 25.

¶¶¶ John xi. 42.

¶¶¶ Heb. ix. 24.

¶¶¶¶ 1 John ii. 1.

¶¶¶¶ Heb. x. 21.

¶¶¶¶ Col. i. 19.

¶¶¶¶¶ John i. 16.

**** 2 Cor. 20.

¶¶¶¶¶ Psalm lxxxix. 28.

¶¶¶¶¶ Isa. lix. xxi.

¶¶¶¶¶ 2 Sam. xxii. 5.

¶¶¶¶¶ Gal. iii. 17, and Eph. i. 4

¶¶¶¶¶ Heb. vi. 17, 18

***** Gal. iii. 15.

by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David”* (i. e., David’s Lord, as is evident from the context). “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that *I will not turn away from them to do them good*” (here is *God’s faithfulness*), “but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;”† (here is *our perseverance*). “The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”‡ “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:”§ and how sure those mercies are, may be seen from Jer. xxxiii. 20, 26. “Thus hath the Lord sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant forever; holy and reverend is his name.”|| Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! The whole earth shall be full of thy glory! Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever!

That blessed child of the covenant, Hooker, has expressed his faith in the final perseverance of God’s elect in terms so beautiful and glorious, that I cannot close this little work without inserting them. “Blessed forever and ever be that mother’s child, whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heavens may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, and the stars their glory; but concerning the man that trusted in God, if the fire have proclaimed itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head, if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have as it were religiously adored the very flesh of the faithful man; what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him? If I be of this note, who shall make a separation between me and my God? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No; I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall ever prevail so far over me. I know in whom I have believed; I am not ignorant whose precious blood has been shed for me; I have a shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power; unto him I commit myself; his own finger hath engraved this sentence in the tables of my heart, *Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not*: Therefore the assurance of my hope I will labor to keep, as a jewel, unto the end; and by labor, through the gracious mediation of his prayer, I shall keep it.”

* Psalm lxxxix. 34, 35.

† Jer. xxxii. 40.

‡ Isa. liv. 9, 10.

§ Isa. iv. 3.

|| Psalm cxli. 9.







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